

# SCIENCE AND WISDOM



*By the Same Author*

The Degrees of Knowledge

True Humanism

Antisemitism

Redeeming the Time

JACQUES MARITAIN

SCIENCE AND WISDOM

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## PREFACE

**T**he studies which go to make up this book are the text of three lectures delivered at Rome at the *Angelicum* in March 1934. They have been slightly re-arranged and now and again additions have been made. They form a connected whole, however, and each can be properly understood only when read in conjunction with the others. There is, moreover, a special correspondence between the first and the third. Both of these touch on questions whose importance for the philosophy of culture is, in my opinion, vital.

The second study is the condensation of a series of lectures which have recently appeared in the collection *Cours et Documents de Philosophie*.<sup>1</sup> Those who refer to the text of these lectures will find there a deeper and more technical discussion and a fuller exposition of my thought.

In the third study I have taken up as a whole the problem of christian philosophy which is also the subject of an earlier essay.<sup>2</sup> On certain points of substance it refers the reader to what has already been discussed in this earlier essay; on a number of other points it brings fresh light and new precisions. I hope that a simpler and more synthetic method of

<sup>1</sup> *La Philosophie de la Nature, Essai critique sur ses frontières et son objet*. Paris: Tequi, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*. Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1933.

exposition will bring into better light the basic soundness of the solution which I have propounded of a particularly serious problem.

It goes without saying among Christians that faith exercises an external and negative control which guards the philosopher from errors against revealed doctrine into which he might otherwise fall. But faith is not only a *negative norm* in matters of philosophy. What I have tried to show is that considered in the order of its exercise (and even, so far as practical philosophy is concerned, in the order of specification) philosophy is given a *positively* christian character by christian revelation and by the supra-philosophical enlightenment present in the thinker by force of the virtues and of the graces.

My study is addressed to philosophers who are unbelievers as well as to those who believe; but more, perhaps, to some of the latter, especially to certain neo-scholastics who do not seem to be free from prejudices on the subject under discussion.

So far as moral philosophy and its relation to theology is more particularly concerned I have scarcely any hope of convincing those whose minds are preoccupied with an oversimple academic Aristotelianism and who admit the validity, as the true science of human action, of a *purely philosophical* moral philosophy which (in spite of Aristotle himself) they are apt to erect into some sort of speculative or theoretical science of action. Nor have I more hope of convincing those—often the same people—who would reserve to theology



any truly practical science of human action and who would thus unduly circumscribe many fruitful spheres of philosophical activity. It is not, thank God, in their power to abolish philosophical activity altogether; but they refuse it the possibility of setting itself up as a science which is in its measure illuminated by the light of theology.

Nor do I hope to convince those dichards who are scandalised that problems which had not been expressly singled out and treated by the old scholastics should be offered for philosophical reflection in our time.

Finally I have little hope of convincing those advocates of hurried solutions who refuse to discuss the many difficulties and subtleties the question involves, and who do not realise that owing to the idealist, positivist and empiricist errors of the nineteenth century and the neglect which many primary truths of moral philosophy have suffered, the latter may need to be in some sense rediscovered in our day.

Here, then, are some conditions not very favourable for our enterprise. But this only makes me think it is the more important to insist on my central thesis of the validity and the necessity of a moral philosophy worked out within the faith and enlightened by the light of theology.

Every truth which is freshly propounded requires a certain time for decantation so as to appear in its true character, rid of the impurities and confusions with which it is held in the minds of those who understand it first of all in terms of ideas of some other origin by which they are already influenced. The method of argument by which it is defended needs

itself to be brought into adjustment for it sometimes happens that the argumentation is less clear than the positive vision by which the truth in question reveals itself to the intelligence. Moreover it may seem tedious to unravel one by one those dialectical difficulties whose natural tendency is to multiply themselves to infinity; but sometimes this must be done and the great commentators on St. Thomas accept it with good grace.

The desire to avoid misunderstandings and to forestall objections has led me to develop considerably the original text of the lecture on christian philosophy delivered at Rome and to add numerous notes. Moreover, I was there unable to enter into certain purely technical explanations and certain details of argumentation to which, following the masters, I have attempted to devote a few pages. These added explanations will be found in the supplementary *Observations* at the end of the book.

*PART ONE*  
**SCIENCE AND WISDOM**





## SCIENCE AND WISDOM

### I

**T**he title of these three essays has great human significance. Science and wisdom are words pregnant with meaning. In fact they recall us to our origins and dominate the whole of our history.

St. John of the Cross says that when the soul has arrived at the perfection of wisdom, that is to say of unity, it knows very well what good and evil are, but cannot find a sense of evil in anything it beholds, because it has no longer any co-naturality with evil and so to speak has closed its eyes to it; while on the other hand, at the limit of particularisation connoted by the word 'science' which gives rise in its turn to moral inquiry, the soul knows evil as well as good with the taste or savour of experience that is proper to each. And this supposes the experience of sin and death. Hence we can understand the profound sense in which it may be said that the first man preferred science to wisdom. Contemplation is above time. We can understand, also, by virtue of what a fall from union human history was set in motion.

But I do not wish to speak here of this drama of history. I only desire to sketch the broad intellectual attitudes taken with regard to these two terms 'knowledge' and 'wisdom',

respectively, in the ancient world, the christian world and the world of our time. And when I use the word knowledge I shall no longer use it in the extreme or extremist sense which I gave it a moment ago—that of the biblical expression concerning ‘the tree of knowledge of good and evil’, in which I distinguished the knowledge of the sinner. I will use it in the more usual and purer sense, in the classical sense which makes it mean a certain type of knowing and a certain perfection of the intelligence; where we have to do with the knowledge of the causes of things; with a knowledge which is as such a certain nobility of mind; and which has a certain dignity.

Thus, the word knowledge has three meanings. In a superior sense it means *knowing in a firm and stable way*. It is not exhaustive, of course (except in God), but it is armed for certitude and capable of advancing endlessly in the way of truth. In this sense wisdom is comprehended in knowledge, and is its highest region. We speak of the ‘knowledge of the saints’ as we speak of ‘the wisdom of the saints’. In this first sense, which is the most comprehensive, we may speak of ‘knowledge or understanding’.

In an intermediate sense the word knowledge is taken in opposition to the highest regions of our understanding. In this sense it means science in contradistinction to wisdom, and has to do with the less exalted regions of our understanding. We do not describe botanical or linguistic knowledge as wisdom, but as science. Wisdom is knowledge through the highest sources and in the deepest and simplest



sense. But knowledge or science in this second sense means *knowing in detail and by proximate or apparent causes*. In this sense we speak of 'science, or the special sciences'.

And finally there is a third and inferior sense, an unclassical sense, which is not used and ought not to be used by the *philosophia perennis*, though it has its place in the common speech of men. In this sense the word knowledge no longer connotes a firm and perfect mode of understanding, but a way of knowing that is curious of detail and that likes the tang of created things, savouring them and entering into a kind of connivance with them. In this sense knowledge is more than ever in opposition to wisdom. One may speak, for instance, as I did a moment ago, of the knowledge of the sinner and, as well as this of another form of connivance, the science of the magician. And yet again, because this measure is more varied than it seems, and is not always prejudicial in meaning, one can speak of the science or knowledge of the wine-taster, or of the lover of souls, or of the science of the sorcerer. But it is even less proper to talk of the wisdom of the lover of souls or the sorcerer than of the botanist or the linguist.

It is useful to remark at the outset this extreme and not too reassuring aspect of knowledge or science. We need not return to it again. Henceforward we shall be dealing with knowledge or science which is good and desirable in itself; whether with science in the general sense of scholarship, or science in the narrower sense of the particular sciences. In both cases science is in itself good and noble. And if we say

that science is inferior to wisdom, it is inferior in the sense in which one perfection is inferior to another perfection, one virtue to another virtue; inferior in the sense in which one world of mystery and beauty is inferior to another world of intelligence and mystery.

## II

It is to the credit of pagan antiquity always to have understood that wisdom is a science, a form of knowledge, a perfection of the intellect, that it brings into play the highest speculative energies of the intelligence; for were it not so the very order of human nature would be overturned. And it is also to the credit of the ancient world that it never for a moment dreamt that science, in the sense of the special sciences, could claim to prevail over wisdom and enter into conflict with it. For the ancient world always realised that wisdom was sovereignly to be desired, that it is a science of freedom, and that it relates man to the divine. But what is this wisdom, and in what does it consist? In a general way we find in the ancient world what we may call a *competition of wisdoms*.

It is impossible to speak, however briefly, of the pre-christian forms of wisdom without attempting first of all to sketch the attitude of oriental thought, and above all of Hindu thought. But how can the christian approach this question without asking also why a world so marvellously gifted, so far as its natural disposition is concerned, for con-



templation and 'the better part', remained so long remote from the explicit revelation of the divine Word. Perhaps we may think that here too God preferred to choose the *infirmi mundi*; and spread the preaching of the gospel first of all amongst us active barbarians of the West, who were destroyers and heirs of the Roman empire, rather than amongst cultures who were so rich and so luxuriant that, had they been activated by the ferment of revelation, they might have run the risk of resigning the deposit of supernatural faith into the hands of an overgrown and discordant intellectualism. The experience of the neo-Platonic gnosis and of Byzantine theology may perhaps lend some support to such a way of conceiving the problem of East and West.

However this may be, one is tempted to say that India had in mind the contemplation of Adam before the fall and preferred to imitate according to her capacity its supra-temporal immobility. And thus held in reserve under a regime in which, as Saint Paul says, the just man is a law unto himself, India remained in a state of expectancy, a mighty witness to the supreme natural aspirations and the inherent weakness of the human spirit.

India always conceived of wisdom as a wisdom of deliverance and salvation. And her immense metaphysical speculations never quite attained a purely speculative style seeing that they were involved in a practical science of perfection and holiness.

The prophets and the Messiah of the people of God did not teach India this wisdom of salvation. She struggled to

reach it by a desperate urge which came from the depths of the soul, a sort of tidal wave of the divine energies that are spread in the universe and concentrated in man. How should India have been able to distinguish as we do between the supernatural order—that is to say the order of participation in the intimate life of God—and the natural order? In her eyes nature itself, freed from the constraints of illusion and the power of causality, must transcend itself in a perfection which we may call supernatural in quite another sense. Wisdom, the wisdom of salvation, the wisdom of the saints, is to be achieved by the ascetical and mystical effort of human nature.

I am fully aware that India bases all her philosophy on a sacred revelation, and that the idea of divine grace is not absent from her thought. I am fully aware that in the sort of prefiguration of an unknown truth, the fervour of *bhakti* brought to India, mercy and love were conceived as descending to us from on high. But theism and the doctrine of piety of *bhakti* are only one aspect of Hindu thought, and one, moreover, which did not always retain its purity. And even if grace was indeed received from above, the significance of such a gift remains implicit and unexplained. As for the sacred revelation upon which all Hindu thought depends, it is not the living voice of a God telling of himself through His Son and bringing to the heart of humanity His truth which can tolerate no immixture. It is a holy literature inherited from the wise men and deposited in the shelter of a ritual tradition: from which each *dharsana*, each human



school of thought will derive different truths, and differing rays of wisdom.

Thus we have every reason for saying that India conceived of the wisdom of salvation and of holiness as a supreme good which should be achieved by an effort upward of the energies immanent in nature, by a supreme stretch of the capacities of our spirit. Such a concrete description, in terms of movement, seems to me much more important than more analytical descriptions which concern themselves with hidden structures. I am not examining here what answers in this movement to nature and what to grace. But in my view the essential character of this wisdom and in general of the wisdom of the East consists in this: that it is first of all and above all an *ascensus*, a *movement upwards* whereby man endeavours to pass into superhuman conditions and enter into divine liberty. From this point of view we can see the full significance of the athleticism of mortification, the strained asceticism and the plethora of means and recipes and methods of perfection and contemplation which can be observed so often in the Orient.

And the rush of the crowds beneath the car of Juggernaut takes on a special symbolic value. For the wisdom of salvation is not open to our achievement. We do not carry the key that opens heaven. Heaven itself must open the gates. And though a grace whose true name they did not know may have raised to great heights the souls in good faith and of good will who sought this wisdom, nevertheless the wisdom itself, the wisdom of the Hindus, was bound finally to



fail *as wisdom*. It was bound to remain without reaching a goal, to struggle endlessly to escape from monism, yet unable to take thought without laying itself open to it; aspiring always for deliverance in positive beatitude and only managing, according to Buddhist experience, to explain *Nirvana* in terms that were more and more near to pure negation. If India knew her own soul she could but sing: *Expectans expectavi*.

Greek wisdom is quite another affair. It is human wisdom, rational wisdom. It is not the wisdom of philosophy aspiring to be a wisdom of salvation. It is a wisdom of philosophy with an order of its own, following its own line of *perfectum opus rationis*, a perfect work of reason.<sup>1</sup> But here is no longer any question of a wisdom of salvation and holiness, a wisdom of eternal life. It is a wisdom of here below, a wisdom of earth. I do not say it is *rationalist* wisdom, but *rational* wisdom, wisdom turned towards created things.

Here again it is necessary to make distinctions, and to understand in a very unmodern sense (in a 'pre-cartesian' sense) the word 'rational' which I have just used. I am aware that sacred traditions never ceased to move in the background of Greek thought and that the reason of the ancient world was naturally religious and was formed in a climate of natural piety haunted by many terrors. It recognised good and bad fortune, believed in inspiration from above and in

<sup>1</sup> I hope this expression of St. Thomas will not scandalise the followers of M. Blondel. Of this perfection of the reason as of the perfection of the religious state, we may say that it is a need which stimulates and not a possession which satisfies—a *perfectio acquirenda*, a perfection to be acquired, and which is never fully acquired.

demoniacal influences. The thought of Destiny and the jealousy of the Gods, the superstitious fear of admitting happiness, the very adoration of divine similitudes widespread in nature, bear witness to a profound sentiment of the tragic element in man's estate, and to a religious sense of the superhuman energies at work in the world. For all that, Greek wisdom is not constituted on the basis of hieratical and priestly traditions like the wisdom of the Orient, but outside them and sometimes opposing them. Greek wisdom does not start out from the Supreme, from absolute Being, as the Vedanta did, asking how anything can exist which is not God and finally renouncing hope of finding a reply which is not illusion. It starts out from things, from tangible and visible reality, from becoming, from movement, from the manifold which with such scandalous energy exerts its being.

Even if it failed to hold to it, Greek wisdom experienced at a decisive moment a sense of the real which is offered to our human mind and experience, and of the *existence* of that which is not God. Here was its peculiar merit which perhaps explains the strange favour bestowed by Providence on these frivolous and noisy folk. For it seems to have no liking for *angelism*. It is not good to despise the creature of flesh and blood. A certain affirmation, though it be frivolous and disordered or even pagan, of the ontological gifts that operate in nature and in man has less of pride in it than the refusal to accept the condition of mortality. Here lies the significance of the honour that history has paid to the Greeks for having



lifted up the image of man in face of the crushing divinities of the East.

Greek wisdom has the common measures of mankind. It is a strictly philosophical wisdom with no pretension to lead us into union with God, but leading only to a rational knowledge of the universe. What it achieved best was to disengage the *idea* of itself, and that point I specially desire to maintain. It had of itself and of the rational process an admirably just idea which has entered for ever into the heritage of mankind. Without question it sinned by philosophical optimism, but it knew what it is to philosophise. It discerned with sureness the fundamental distinction between speculative philosophy and practical philosophy, the object and nature of metaphysics, physics and logic, the hierarchy of the sciences and the subordination of the special sciences to the simplest and most universal science, the science which is the most highly speculative and the most disinterested, which has to do with being as such and with the causes of being.

And it had the beginnings of everything. The human wisdom of the Greeks not only had the idea of what it ought to be, but in addition it succeeded in setting itself up and coming into existence: in outline and in promise. The outline itself is so beautiful that the optical error in our retrospection might easily deceive us into thinking it a finished work. . . .

The peculiar beauty of Greek wisdom is that of a sketch or draft, a creation of genius whose outline and essential points are traced with infallible art. It could not finish the

work and the work is nowhere complete. It is incomplete on the metaphysical side. We know how Aristotle, faced with the questions that concern the supreme spiritual realities, hesitated and shut his eyes: we know his errors and how small a following his great speculative discoveries won in the ancient world. It is incomplete on the scientific side, for though the physico-mathematical method was applied with success in certain particular domains it never came to be used as a means of acquiring a general knowledge of natural phenomena: and though physics were well based so far as their philosophical principles were concerned, they led to great errors in detailed explanation of phenomena. It is incomplete on the moral side, where neither the philosophy of pleasure nor that of virtue led to any conclusion, except to despair of the possibility of true wisdom.

And when this human wisdom tried to complete itself by its own unaided efforts, it took a bad turn. It was not content to fulfil its mission and affirm the ontological consistency and value of creatures. Instead of paying honour to the principle of created being, as shown in created things themselves, it divinised them. For this it earned the condemnation of St. Paul. In the end it called in vain for the help of the East, of a syncretism without existential roots, and sought a remedy for the great melancholy of paganism in mystagogy and magic. It renounced the realism in orienting thought to which its original strength had lain: and contented itself with a substitute, a dialectical world in which the search is only for an ideal procession of essences, and for an ecstasy which



lies beyond being. The neglect of the singular, and more profoundly of existing things, the primacy of the generic and the logical which it is the fashion (quite wrongly) to blame on Aristotle—really represents what was a temptation for Greek philosophy and finally brought about its defeat when it showed itself no longer capable of sustaining Aristotle. The Renaissance of platonic idealism during the Alexandrine period was a punishment on human wisdom which had grown degenerate. And I am not sure that the same cannot be said of every platonist revival during the course of history.

But in the ancient world there is a third wisdom, the wisdom of Moses and the prophets, the wisdom of the Old Testament. It is not human wisdom like the Greek. The Jewish world until Philo seems to have even ignored or despised all strictly philosophical and metaphysical inquiry, every search for human wisdom. It is a wisdom of salvation and holiness, of deliverance and freedom, of eternal life. But it is differentiated from Hinduism by the fact that man does not achieve it by his own effort. *Quis ascendet in caelum*, who will ascend to heaven and look for it?<sup>1</sup> The heart of Israel knew that no effort of asceticism and of mysticism could *force* that wisdom. Wisdom must give itself, must itself open the gates and descend from heaven.

Here we have the peculiar mark of the true wisdom of eternal life. As it is a matter of entering into the depths of God, how would it be even conceivable if God Himself did not take the initiative with a free gift?

<sup>1</sup> Deuter. xxx. 12; Rom. x. 6; Baruch, cap. III.

The long unwearying impatience of the Jews beseeches God to give Himself—God whose only wish is to give Himself, and yet who hides Himself. And He will come even in person and in the flesh, and descend lower than all so as to save all. Wisdom itself will bear our sorrows.

Nowhere is wisdom spoken of more gloriously and more mysteriously than in the Bible. It appears as increate and yet created, it is identified with God and is yet the first creature, the maternal form, so to speak, in which all things are planned and formed. So much so that in our time certain orthodox Russian theologians have tried to turn *Sophia* into some sort of hypostasis mediating between the uncreated and the created. They do not see that this expression moves analogically from God to His consubstantial Word made Flesh and to Her who, inseparable from Him, and reflecting God as perfectly as a pure creature can, was Herself, too, and for this reason foreseen from the beginning.

The wisdom of the Old Testament is bound up with the most inflexible idea of divine transcendence, and of the abyss of glory of an uncreated life whose thoughts are not like our thoughts, and whose initiatives and sanctions intervene perpetually in our history. And it is bound up with the idea of creation *ex nihilo*. It seems to me very remarkable that while we have here a conception as opposed as possible to any immanentist monism more or less compromising the divine personality, we have at the same time a conception of the creature as far removed as possible from an effacement of created being, of its human reality, of its personality and



freedom in face of the divine. This perishable and corruptible flesh, this very flesh will arise again—an idea that Greek wisdom never even suspected. History is an unimaginable drama of the confrontation of free personalities, of the eternal divine personality and our own personality. And how real is the being and existence of these created personalities! If we wish to get beyond the nightmare of a banal 'indefinite pronoun' existence, of 'one' instead of 'I'—by which all our imaginations are oppressed in modern conditions; if we want to awake to the consciousness of ourselves and *our* own existence, we may indeed read Heidegger, but we would surely do better to read the Bible. The behaviour of the patriarchs, of Moses, David, Job and Ezekiel before God will teach us what *personal existence*, as distinguished from 'anonymous' existence, is; the existence of an *Ego*. They have no shame in existing and in existing in their own name precisely because they are in the all-powerful hand of Him who made them. Everything in Holy Scripture is dialogue: it is always a question of 'Thou' and 'I'.

The wisdom of the Old Testament cries out that our personality exists ultimately only in humility, and is only saved by the divine personality. For the One is a personality which gives and the other only a personality that is given.

And here is the chief point I wish to make. This supernatural wisdom is a wisdom which gives itself, which descends from the Author of Being in a torrent of generosity. The wisdom of salvation, the wisdom of holiness is not achieved by man but given by God. It proceeds essentially

not from an ascending movement on the part of the creature but from a descent of the creative Spirit. And that is why it is essentially supraphilosophical, suprametaphysical, and really divine. Prior to all more detailed specification we must see the difference between the wisdom of the Ganges and of Tibet and the wisdom of the Jordan in terms of the opposition of two movements, of ascent and descent. The wisdom of the sapiential books like the wisdom of the gospels emanates from the depths of uncreated love, stretches from one shore to the other and descends into the deepest being of the creature. And that is why it cries out in public places, on the roofs, knocks at the doors and is freely given. What is essentially secret it proclaims: if anyone thirst, let him come and drink; a secret so hidden that it hides within itself him to whom it is made known.

At one moment, with Philo, an effort was made to conciliate this wisdom and the wisdom of the Greeks. But such an eclecticism, from which St. Justin and several of the early fathers were not exempt, was bound to be vain. There was a fatal warfare between the wisdom of the philosophers and the wisdom of the saints. The former, as I have pointed out, claims to be complete in itself and to suffice for mankind. It raises a mountain of pride, and unites the energies of paganism in gnosis and its factitious mysteries. The latter at last uncovers its face, inclines its head crowned with thorns, a scandal to the Jews, a folly to the Gentiles. This conflict of wisdoms marks the ruin of the ancient world. Paul is its great witness. St. Augustine who had experienced



the conflict and resolved it in his own case is its doctor and judge.

Later centuries were to live on Augustine's doctrine of wisdom and knowledge. Augustine taught them that between *wisdom* which knows by higher understanding in the daylight of the divine order, and *science* which knows by inferior reason in the twilight of created things, there is an order of preference for or against which souls and civilisations must choose. For science is good and worthy of love, but it is not above wisdom. If not in its very nature, at least in its human dynamism and in its relation to human life, it belongs to the sphere of *uti*, and it is absurd to take the useful as end. An end is that which is truly ultimate and delectable, and wisdom belongs to the order of *frui*. If the three divine Persons are the supreme object of man's fruition, wisdom is so to speak a foretaste of the Trinity. But it is clear that the wisdom of which St. Augustine speaks is first and foremost the wisdom of grace.<sup>1</sup> The wisdom of this world is overcome, and subordinate to it. And it is a conquest without loss or harm, neither for the conqueror nor for the conquered, because in ridding itself from the mixtures of syncretism and pride, the wisdom of the philosophers recovers its true nature and its own truth.

### III

Thus, if the ancient world appears as the world of a *competition of wisdoms*, the christian world will appear to us as

<sup>1</sup> For the different character of conversion in the philosophical and the christian sense, see Arthur Nock's analyses in his book on *Conversion*.

the world of *synthesis* and of the *hierarchy of wisdoms*. This order, which is the very order of the soul, is for human beings order *par excellence*. All other more visible orders, social, political and economic, important though they be in their place, are secondary to it and even depend on it. That is why, in spite of its wretchedness, mediaeval society was in its way an outstanding success. It knew this order of wisdom.

But we must understand the basic facts. We are not dealing here with a simple and, so to speak, architectural arrangement. In this order everything is movement, life, inspiration. It proceeds from love. Two deeps call one to another and hurl themselves one towards the other. But it is from on high that all begins.

I spoke just now of a descending movement in connexion with the salvation-wisdom of the Old Testament. It is time to call the law of this movement by its proper name. It is the law of the Incarnation. St. Thomas formulates it in a text valid not only for the head but alike for the whole body. '*In mysterio incarnationis magis consideratur descensus divinae plenitudinis in naturam humanam, quam profectus humanae naturae, quasi praeexistentis, in Deum.*'<sup>1</sup> In the mystery of the Incarnation the descent of the divine plenitude into the depths of our human nature matters more than the ascent of human nature towards God.

Thus there is a double movement in the christian universe. And the movement by which it mounts upwards to God is only a consequence of the primary movement by which God

<sup>1</sup> *Sum. Theol.*, iii, 34, 1, ad. 1.



descends to it. And the more it opens itself to the movement by which God gives Himself, the more is awakened in it the movement by which it gives itself to God. For grace quickens and is not, as Luther thought, a mantle thrown over a dead man. Stirred to his depths the creature emerges from sleep and becomes the image of vigilance and activity: in the end, activity *par excellence*, of love and contemplation and superabundance. But also, on the way, and as a means to the end, moral and ascetic activity, practical and militant.

Perhaps we can see here the deepest motive of that historical dynamism which so strangely marks the christian West, and that efficient energy which, when it rejects its first principle and rule, leads of necessity to the distraction and the destruction of mankind. In any case, as soon as man came to believe that the *second* movement was the *first*, when in the age of anthropocentric humanism, and its practical pelagianism, he forgot that the first initiative in love, as in goodness and in being, is with God, and behaved as if the progress of the creature was prior to the *descensus divinae plenitudinis in eam*, while the christian world was worked on by the threefold ferment of the Renaissance, of rationalism and of its jansenist or protestant opposite (which, in annihilating man on the side of divine things, exalted him in equal measure on the side of earthly goods) was bound inevitably to dissolve.

But here I want to offer another observation. In the very bosom of the faith, in the christian obedience itself, remaining true to the whole of revelation, it may happen—for the

workings of grace are hidden—that the ascending movement of the creature to God, his effort—and remember it is absolutely required and indispensable—to arrive at spiritual perfection, may hide from our eyes the descending movement, the self-giving of uncreated love. If this happens there will be a growing discord between the reality of christian life, and the way one is conscious of it, the way one believes it ought to be lived. Religion will become less and less *real*, appearances will become more important and one will live by them. One will retain one's belief in grace but one will behave as if it was only a façade on a monument, as if, supposing by chance it ceased to operate, things would still hold together without it, with the help of purely human precautionary aids and props. Such epochs work against the stream of grace, and there is no reason to wonder at their ineffectiveness.

The Middle Ages were anything but such an epoch. Their vast human activity, which may perhaps deceive the historian, did not deceive the mediaevals. They knew that this constructive work only masked an invisible mystery of love and humility. They obeyed the law of the Incarnation, which continued to accomplish its effects in them; they obeyed that folly by which love desires at whatever cost that the divine and the spiritual should descend into the temporal and the human and there take flesh. Mediaeval Christianity knew that the Word became Flesh, and that the Holy Spirit follows this movement and descends among us. It opened out the universe of thought to the tide which ran through it



from one level to another. And in this way the universe came to know the order of wisdom, and saw accomplished in it, for a while, the peaceful conjuncture and harmony of wisdoms.

According to the doctrine made classical by St. Thomas there are three sorts of wisdom essentially distinct and hierarchically ordered. Infused wisdom or the wisdom of grace, theological wisdom, and metaphysical wisdom.

They differ from one another by their objective light and their formal object. The first has for its own special light the kinship of love with the supernatural. It attains God in an experimental and superhuman way in his intimate life and according to his *deitas* itself; and it attains to created things in so far as they refer to God so known. It is a wisdom of love and of union. As its principles theologians enumerate faith and charity and the gifts of the Holy Spirit acting under God's actual inspiration and illumination. And this wisdom knows what it knows according to something that is itself divine, according to the very gift that God makes of Himself to the soul, according to the effusion of which we have already spoken, according to the descending movement in us of divine plenitude. Hence though it is the supreme essence and activity of the soul, it consists first of all in receiving, in yielding to an all powerful current. If it is completely enwrapped in God, and is superior to concepts and images, it is truly mystical contemplation. Being sovereign, it can make use of everything. It may use the treasures of the imagination and of creative intuition, and the stammerings

of poetry: and then it sings with David. Or it may make use of the ideas and treasures of the intelligence and the stammerings of the philosophers: and then it teaches with St. Augustine.

The second form of wisdom is theological wisdom. Its special light is the communication of the knowledge which God has of Himself, which is made to us by revelation, and which offers to unfold its content to the effort of our intellect. In a human and discursive way it knows God in his intimate life and in his divinity, and it knows created things in their relation to God so known. This is a wisdom of faith and reason, of faith making use of reason. It is natural in the sense that it proceeds according to human logic and is constituted thanks to the labour and equipment of reason; it is supernatural in its roots because it exists and lives only through faith. Thus in it the movement of divine descent and communication must be considered primarily, but not exclusively. In addition, progressive work and human toil and technique have their place. This wisdom is divine in its object and suited by its mode to our natural manner of working. The bread it provides is gained with the sweat of our brow. Some people are impatient of it because they know and prefer the peace of divine things, others because they do not like work and are lazy.

Metaphysical wisdom has for its own special light the intelligibility of Being in its pure state, (i.e. without interior reference to a construction in the imagination or a sense experience) at the highest degree of abstractive intuition. Its



formal object is not God in his *deitas*, but Being in its own proper mystery, *ens secundum quod ens*. It knows God only as the cause of Being. It is a rational wisdom, and is natural in its essence. It is wholly resolved in natural and rational evidence. In itself it does not imply the divine communication and supernatural descent of the Godhead of which we have spoken, but only natural communication and that initial creative generosity, by which the supreme Intelligence enlightens every man coming into this world. It is entirely contained within the order of the progressive movement of human reason towards the supreme truths which are accessible to it of themselves and by right.

Because of that dynamism which is of the substance of the soul, and which was never more intensely experienced than by St. Thomas Aquinas, the lower wisdom of itself aspires to the higher wisdom. Not because it is in itself powerless in regard to its proper object, which would be absurd: but because the more it attains its object, the more this object awakens in it the desire of a higher knowledge, and the more in this sense it forms a void which the lower wisdom is by its essence incapable of filling. It does not aspire towards the higher wisdom because it knows incompetently its own proper object and according to the measure of its incompetence: but because it knows it well. Thus the more it drinks, the more it thirsts. The more metaphysics knows being the more it wants to see the cause of being, and in expectancy to pass beyond language and logic, and even in the discursive order to keep to the summits of its spiritual

domain (of which it knows the gods are envious), of definitive data and absolutely certain landmarks, points of crystallisation in the intellectual order which are more incontestable and more suggestive than those furnished by the senses in physical science. Theology will supply them. The more theology knows God from a distance the more it wants to know Him through experience. The more mystical wisdom knows God by way of experience, the more it aspires to the vision of Him. And each time the higher discipline gives to the soul that which it has been encouraged by the lower discipline to desire.

But how are these desires fulfilled, save by the quickening gift which pours from Pure Act? And not only does He fulfil them, but He enlarges their scope and unceasingly vivifies them. Nor is it possible to discern to what extent His loving-kindness entered into those aspirations on the lower plane of which we have already spoken.

It is clear that the more the soul welcomes this quickening gift, the more the deep energies are awakened in its depths by which it mounts towards Him. Thus is theology activated by contemplation and metaphysics by theology. And this is not a violent or despotic rule, but a natural and spontaneous movement like that of the tides and the seasons.

At this price only, which is a condition *sine qua non*, order and harmony, unity of life, force and suppleness are maintained in the spiritual universe between the three concurrent and synergic wisdoms. The spiritual unity that mediaeval Christendom knew was made possible only because and in so



far as mediaeval Christianity understood (as it sang in the hymns to the Holy Spirit) that nothing in us is purified or strengthened nor made more supple in any permanent way if the Supreme Giver does not make firm and strong the frailties of our being.

I have spoken of the harmony of the various sorts of wisdom. But there is need to talk, too, of the harmony between wisdom and knowledge or the special sciences, in the sense in which they were conceived by the christian Middle Ages. One ought to point out how the activation of reason in the christian system, the scientific traditions of the Greeks and Arabs, the discipline and objectivity of scholasticism, and the deep realism of the christian soul with its characteristic inclination to come to terms of brotherhood with created nature, all combined to arouse a powerful scientific urge from which we profit in modern times.

Notice the significant delay which caused this urge to be manifested most visibly at the moment when mediaeval wisdom was beginning to decline and nominalism was becoming stronger. In truth, modern science was opened up not only by empiricists like Roger Bacon and eclectics like the fourteenth-century doctors of Paris, but also by doctors of wisdom like Albert the Great. But still, in a general way wisdom showed at that time a spirit of imperialism, and pressed its yoke too heavily on science—a mistake for which it was to pay dearly. It loved science and its curiosity concerning created things was very great. But it made science work in the livery of philosophy and believed, alas! in Aris-

totle's mechanics as much as in his metaphysics. If philosophy suffered as a result of this state of affairs, science suffered much more. And science could only reap its harvest in the field of experience when it had removed and smashed the marble slabs on Aristotle's tomb.

At the same time it is worth asking whether the technical poverty of the Middle Ages did not help to preserve its spiritual hierarchies against danger and temptation. For mediaeval man was as frail and curious as we are. Unable even to dream of reigning in godlike fashion over external nature with the help of mathematical science, because of his lack of means, he found it easier to keep his soul uplifted towards eternal things. . . .

#### IV

It is from the sixteenth century onwards that we get the reversal which is characteristic of the modern world. The intellectual order of the Middle Ages is broken up. The modern world, by which I mean the world which is coming to an end before our eyes, has not been a world of harmony between forms of wisdom, but one of conflict between wisdom and the sciences, and it has seen the victory of science over wisdom.

The order of mediaeval thought was not achieved without struggle and scission, without discord and contrast. It was constantly threatened from without, and only achieved historical realisation in a precarious way. From the thirteenth



century onwards it was shaken by a violent crisis—the averroist crisis which still continues to-day. Averroism really meant an effort to separate philosophical wisdom from theological wisdom. It tore it away from the Synergic movement from above of which I have spoken and set it up in perfect isolation. It thus cut man into two parts, one being man according to pure nature, with his philosophic wisdom: the other being man according to grace and faith, with his theological or even mystical wisdom. The myth of the two truths, and it is really a myth, is an adequate symbol of this duplication.

The effort at separation was centred on metaphysics. It failed, for a time, as is well known, thanks to St. Thomas. But the drama was more violent and the action of Siger de Brabant was of deeper significance than is usually imagined. M. Gilson recently pointed out the theological-political Averroism of Dante's *De Monarchia*. The revival of Averroism in the sixteenth century was a cause which prepared for quite another revolution.

By this I mean the cartesian revolution. I have spoken of it so often that I will mention it only very briefly here. The cartesian revolution also derives from an effort to separate philosophical wisdom from theological wisdom. But this effort was centred on physics rather than on metaphysics, and it succeeded.

As I have tried to show elsewhere<sup>1</sup> Descartes' achievement, whatever may have been his personal intention, was to deny

<sup>1</sup>*Le Songe de Descartes*, Paris, Corréa, 1932.

the possibility of theology as a science or as a way of knowledge. Without such a denial the separation I have spoken of would have been impossible. Strictly speaking Descartes deposed wisdom—and the result, if what I have said concerning the dynamism of christian thought is accurate, could not fail to have an immense effect on philosophy itself.

Henceforward philosophy became separated from the stream of truth and spirituality which came down to it from the heights of the soul. And its own proper order was reversed. It became, as Descartes said, 'practical'; and its goal was to make us 'masters and owners of nature'. Metaphysics ceased to be a summit and became a beginning: and this obliged philosophers after Descartes to proceed in *angelic* fashion, beginning with God and with thought. And why, and with what object? So as to found physics, science and the mathematical possession of nature.

In this way everything is at once turned upside down and pulled to pieces. There is no longer any vital ascending order in the three wisdoms: and as the two highest ones are no longer forms of knowledge, how can they remain forms of wisdom? The name of wisdom can only properly be applied to philosophy. And the internal order of philosophy is turned upside down in a similar way. Metaphysics grows in ambition, takes the place of Theology, installs itself *a priori* in the heaven of pure intelligibility, even of the intelligible in Pure Act. But at the same time it diminishes in strength, it is ordered according to science, and (without being conscious of it) constructs its vast arbitrary systems in dependence on



the positive science of a period, and its passing states. Science is the real winner. The wisdom which believes it is supreme has already been beaten.

Also, the success of the cartesian revolution was the expression of a great movement not only of human intelligence, but also, and primarily, of desire. Science was able to preponderate over wisdom because generally speaking the classical humanist world was subordinated to created wealth as its final end. And such an event was entirely new in the history of civilised mankind. One and the same desire, one and the same mystical covetousness turned the human heart towards the possession of things by way of material control, and by way of intellectual control. The way of humility, the sense of poverty as a mark of the highest knowledge and of the wisest economic system, gave way to the use of riches and a sort of universal gluttony. It is very significant that the reign of science (which was turned into a god), and the reign of money, were rung in at the same moment, at the dawn of the modern world.

So the story continued. Kant had only to deduce the consequences of the cartesian revolution. Just as Descartes separated philosophy from theology, so Kant separated science from metaphysics. As Descartes denied the possibility of theology *as a science*, so Kant denied the possibility of metaphysics *as a science*. And now that metaphysics in its turn was no longer a form of knowledge, how could it be a form of wisdom? It tried to defend itself, without success. After the great effort of German romanticism and idealism

and its failure, metaphysics comes to rest on psychological and moral reflexion. There is no longer any metaphysical wisdom.

But Kant still believed in a philosophy of nature, which was identified in his mind with newtonian physics. Can we take this as a form of wisdom?

Tradition teaches that the philosophy of nature is a form or aspect of wisdom, wisdom *secundum quid* or in a given order. For the moderns of the classical period the philosophy of nature was one and the same as the mathematical knowledge of nature, and cartesian and newtonian science. At the end of the eighteenth century and during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century it was believed that science itself was wisdom—science as the science of phenomena and factual detail, the science which counts the stones of the torrent. The age of Auguste Comte and of Herbert Spencer sought wisdom in science.

But this illusion was soon dissipated. Mathematics has devoured every trace of philosophy that remained in the structure of science. The mathematical and empirical elements have driven out ontology. Thus science (in so far as distinguished from philosophy) is tending more and more perfectly to its pure type, which implies essentially that it is not a form of wisdom. It implies that in the very measure in which it constitutes an autonomous universe of explanation, a conceptual symbolisation which saves sensible appearances: and though it tends wholly towards the real and attains the real, it does so in an enigmatic way and in the half-light of



the *ens rationis* founded *in re*. But in this case there is no wisdom left, which is not of good omen either for science or for the world.

We are not forgetting that science is good in itself. Like everything else which derives from spiritual energy in quest of truth it is naturally sacred: and alas for those who fail to recognise its proper dignity. Every time that the fragile representatives of wisdom thought themselves authorised to despise science and its humble and plebeian truths, in the name of a higher truth, they have been severely and rightly punished. But science is like art in this that though both are good in themselves man can put them to bad uses and bad purposes: while in so far as man uses wisdom<sup>1</sup>—and the same is true of virtue—he can only use it for good purposes.

Of course, we have no intention of returning to the Middle Ages, and denying the huge and magnificent development of the sciences during the course of the last centuries. On the contrary, the peculiar problem of the age lying ahead of us will be to reconcile science and wisdom in a vital and spiritual harmony. The very sciences themselves seem to invite the intelligence to take up such a task. To-day they are ridding themselves of the remains of a materialist metaphysic which disguised their true features, they are calling out for a philosophy of nature. And the admirable renewal

<sup>1</sup>Wisdom is not only speculative, it is also practical: whether it involves, as in philosophy, a practical kind distinct from the speculative kind: or whether, in a superior unity, it is both at once, like theological wisdom and the wisdom of grace which are formally and eminently speculative and practical.



of contemporary physics give to the scientist a sense of the mystery which is stammered by the atom and by the universe. For all this, with the aid of science alone, the scientist cannot arrive at an ontological knowledge of nature.

The condition of such a work of reconciliation is in my opinion the establishment of the critique of knowledge in an entirely new spirit, in a truly realist and metaphysical spirit. With such an approach it will be possible to distinguish, in the depths of the spirit, the specifically and hierarchically distinct degrees of knowledge, and show that they correspond to definitive types of explanation which cannot be substituted one for another. It will become apparent that one selfsame urge, which, though it is transformed on one plane and another, is never other than the urge of the spirit in quest of Being, traverses these heterogeneous zones of knowledge, from the humblest laboratory experiment to the speculations of the metaphysician and the theologian—and even further, to the supra-rational experience and the grace-endowed wisdom of the mystics.

Thus the sciences and philosophy will no longer be as they were so often in the Middle Ages, in a position of subservience to theology. The full and effective recognition of their autonomy is a precious gain made by the efforts of recent centuries. It is an established thing. But this recognition of the autonomy of science will also involve a recognition of its just place in the order of values of the higher forms of knowledge, that is, of wisdom.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

### I

**T**he conflict between philosophy and science leads to a central problem; that of the philosophy of nature. Ought there to be a philosophy of nature which is distinct at one and the same time from metaphysics and the special sciences? What are its characteristics, its nature and definition, its spirit? As these questions are of rather a technical order, the aridity of the exposition which they demand will be excused. They are not easy because they reach us charged with historical implications and associations. Is not the philosophy of nature what Aristotle called physics? Did not the idea of physics cover, for antiquity, the whole province of the natural sciences? Is not the ruin of the Aristotelian explanations of natural phenomena also the ruin of the whole of Aristotelian physics—and hence of the philosophy of nature? And hence, ought not the place of physics in Aristotle's sense to be occupied still for us to-day by physics, but by physics as understood in the sense of Einstein, Planck and Louis de Broglie: or more generally by the body of the sciences of the phenomena of nature, called simply Science by the modern world. Such are the connexions and liaisons



which are involved in the theoretical questions of which I propose to treat.

These questions are fundamental and not easy. We need not hesitate to say that they are of first rate importance for human wisdom. We ought not to neglect the problem of the philosophy of nature. Of all speculative wisdom it is the humblest, the nearest the world of sense, the least perfect. It is not even a form of wisdom in the pure and simple sense of the word, it is wisdom only in the order of mobile and corruptible things. But this is precisely the order most proportioned to our rational nature. This wisdom, which is not even purely and simply wisdom, is the first which is offered in the progressive ascending movement of our thought. And that is why it has such importance for us—precisely because it is at the lowest rung of the ladder of *φιλία τῆς σοφίας*.

In what ways can the real enter within us? There are but two, one natural, the other supernatural: the senses, and the divine Spirit. When we are concerned with the light which descends from heaven it is not metaphysics which is primary, but the highest and purely spiritual wisdom, by which we are enabled to open our soul and being and to receive something which enters into us according to the gift of grace. And if it is a question of the light which springs from earth, it is likewise not metaphysics which is primary, but an inferior wisdom bound up with sense perception and strictly dependent on experience: because it is through the senses that we are open to things, and something enters us, according to our natural mode of knowing.



Metaphysics lies halfway between. It is not directly open, as the platonists taught, to an intuition of divine things. The intuition with which it deals lies at the summit of the process of visualisation or abstraction which begins with the sensible order. It is in itself and formally independent of the philosophy of nature, being superior to it and ruling it. But materially, and *quoad nos*, it presupposes it: not of course in its perfect statement, but at least in its first positions.

## II

How are we to conceive of the first moments of speculation concerning natural things, as shown, for instance, in the history of the pre-socratics? Intelligence is made for being, and our intelligence has to seek it out in corruptible things. It does so: and in seeking out Being it happens on the sensible flux of individual and changing things, on the elusive Becoming. What a deception! Heraclitus and Parmenides are scandalised, each in his own way. Plato is scandalised, too, and he turns away from this deceptive flux. With him the gaze of the intelligence turns again to a world of essences separate from things, and thus ends in a metaphysic of the *extra-real*, conceived in the manner of mathematics. And so we have the sketch of a metaphysic. But what about a philosophy of nature? There is not and there cannot be a philosophy of nature in a system like that of Plato. The sensible world is delivered over to opinion, to *δόξα*.

But with Aristotle the genius of the West safeguarded our

intellectual respect for the being of things we touch and see. His metaphysic is a metaphysic of the *intra-real*. From the very heart of sensible things, so to say, it seizes the pure intelligibility of being: which it separates out in so far as it is being, and divests of what is sensible. And if this can happen it is because the intelligibility of things is not transcendent but immanent in them.

Henceforward before attaining being as being and its pure metaphysical intelligibility in natural things, the intelligence can and must seize in them the intelligibility which is invested in what is sensible. It must know, not by opinion but firmly and demonstratively, the very things that our eyes see: these things are no longer *maya* but an object of science. A scientific type of knowledge, a form of knowledge strictly so called, a philosophy of the sensible universe, of change, of movement, of becoming—this is possible in so far as centres and lines of intelligibility are found in movement itself and as such. The foundations of a philosophy of nature, of *φυσική*, are laid.

These matters have become very commonplace for us. But at the time when they were first discovered how thrilling, how full of promise they were for the human spirit. At the origin of European science and philosophy lies the act of intellectual courage of Aristotle, which surmounted the temptation to discouragement and the deception practised on the intellect by the illusory flight of Becoming and by the contradictions of the first philosophers.

The way in which things are organised in the thought of



Aristotle is well known. The theory of the three degrees or the three orders of abstraction became classic in the schools.<sup>1</sup>

In the first degree of this process, the mind knows an object which it disengages from the singular and contingent moment of sense perception, but whose very intelligibility implies a reference to the sensible. This first and lowest degree of scientific abstraction is precisely the degree of physics and of the philosophy of nature. It defines the field of sensible reality. Above it comes the degree of mathematical abstraction, in which the mind knows an object whose intelligibility no longer implies an intrinsic reference to the sensible, but to the imaginable. This is the domain of the mathematical *praeter-real*. And finally, in the highest degree of intellectual vision, the metaphysical degree, the intelligibility of the object is free from any intrinsic reference to the senses or to imagination. This is the field of *trans-sensible* reality.

Thus, Aristotle did not only lay the foundations of physics. At the same time he threw light on the difference which distinguishes physics from metaphysics—a matter of capital importance. The division of the three orders of abstraction is an analogical division. The three orders are not part of the same genus: they constitute fundamentally different genera. They are not set at stages one above the other in the same generical line: there is a true *noetic* heterogeneity between

<sup>1</sup>The substance of this doctrine is found in Aristotle: and scholastics only made explicit its notional vocabulary. Cp. Aristotle, *Anal. Post.*, lib. I, c. 28; *Phys.*, lib. II, c. 2; *De Anima*, lib. I, c. 1, in fine.



them. That is why St. Thomas teaches, in his commentary on the *de Trinitate* of Boethius, that in the metaphysical order we ought not to be led, as to the term in which our judgments are verified, either to the senses or to the imagination: in the mathematical order our judgments are realised in the world of the imagination, not of the senses: in the physical order the judgment is realised in the world of sense itself. And that is why, he adds, it is a sin of the intellect to wish to proceed in the same way in the three fields of speculative knowledge.

Physics or the philosophy of nature constitutes, with the experimental natural sciences adjoined to it, a universe of intelligibility which is essentially different from the metaphysical universe. This distinction ought to be regarded as fundamental because it is related to the first intuitions of being. We can grasp Being intuitively either as Being, that is to say, isolated in all its intelligible purity and its universality, or else as plunged in the sensible and particularised in the specific diversity—as this or that being—of the world of becoming. This distinction is bound up with the very birth of the philosophy of nature.

But this capital truth was paid for dearly by the ancient philosophers, by Aristotle himself and by the mediaevals; at the price of a serious fault of intellectual precipitancy. One cannot say that the ancient philosophers were incurious concerning the details of phenomena, but they did not see that detailed phenomena demand a special science which is specifically distinct from the philosophy of nature. The philo-

sophical optimism of the ancient world, which led very quickly to very hypothetical explanations concerning detailed phenomena, saw philosophy and experimental sciences as one and the same knowledge. All the sciences of the material world were subdivisions of one unique specific science which was called *philosophia naturalis*, and to which belonged, at one and the same time, the explanation of the substance of bodies, and that of the rainbow and snow-crystals. And so it was even for Descartes. One may say that for the ancient philosophers the philosophy of nature absorbed all the natural sciences and that analysis of the ontological type absorbed all analysis of the empirical type.

### III

The end of the revolution inaugurated by Descartes and Galileo brings us to an exactly opposite error, which was the price paid for great scientific advances. I have just said that the ancient philosophers absorbed the natural sciences into the philosophy of nature. The moderns were to end up by dissolving the philosophy of nature into the natural sciences. A new discipline of an inexhaustible fecundity was to establish its rights. But this discipline, which is not sapiential, was to supplant wisdom—both the wisdom *secundum quid* of the philosophy of nature and the wisdoms that are superior to it.

Below the plane of metaphysics, in the world of the first order of abstraction, was enacted an obscure drama between physico-mathematical knowledge and philosophical know-



ledge of sensible nature: its consequences have been capital for metaphysics itself and for the intellect of mankind. This drama involved two principal moments: in the first, physico-mathematical knowledge was taken for a philosophy of nature, for *the* philosophy of nature: in the second it entirely excluded the philosophy of nature.

The first moment lasted two centuries, from the epoch of Galileo and Descartes to that of Newton and Kant. Prepared by the researches of the great scholastic scientists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, announced and so to speak prophesied by Leonardo da Vinci and by certain Renaissance thinkers, a new mechanics, astronomy and physics triumphed—at the beginning of the seventeenth century—over the explanations of detailed phenomena taught on the same questions in the name, alas, of the philosophy of Aristotle. A new kind of epistemology, a conceptual instrument of a new type was then established in the thought of man. It consisted above all of giving a mathematical reading of sensible things.

One may say that the science which has had such successes during the last three centuries consists in a progressive mathematisation of the sensible order, and its success has been especially valuable for physics. The *noetic* type to which it corresponds was not unknown to the ancient world, but they had only unearthed it in very restricted and particular fields, such as those of astronomy or harmony or geometric optics. They had remarked, however, that here in any event is what they very rightly called an intermediate



science, a *scientia media*. According to the principles of Aristotle and St. Thomas such knowledge ought to be regarded as *formally* mathematical, because its rule of analysis and deduction is mathematical; and as *materially* physical, because it analyses physical reality by number and measure. St. Thomas, moreover, observes in his commentary on the second book of the physics that these sciences, though they are formally mathematical, are nevertheless to a large extent physical, because their term, the term in which their judgment is verified, is sensible nature.

Thus one departs from and returns to sensible reality, to sensible and mobile being as such, but so as to decipher it rationally, thanks to the intelligibles which are the object of the science of extension and of number: hence not in its ontological aspect, but in its quantitative aspect. That is how the new type of knowledge sets about the interpretation of the whole field of natural phenomena. It is clear it is not a philosophy of nature but in very truth a mathematics of nature.

If we have formed a true idea of the essential constituents of this physico-mathematical knowledge, we can appreciate the great folly of the decadent scholastics who opposed it, as if it had been a philosophy of nature contrary to their philosophy. But it was also great folly on the part of the moderns to expect from such a knowledge the last word concerning physical reality, and to look upon it as a philosophy of nature opposed to that of Aristotle and the scholastics. Thus this great epistemological tragedy was based on a misunder-

standing. The problem was posed in the same way for the scholastics and for their adversaries—and erroneously. For both it was a matter of choosing between the ancient philosophy of nature and the new. Now in one case there was a philosophy of nature, and in the other a discipline which can never be a philosophy of nature: two forms of knowledge which do not hunt in the same field, and hence are perfectly compatible with one another.

But a mathematical interpretation or reading of the sensible order evidently can only be made with the aid of the fundamental notions of mathematics, that is to say, of extension and number and also of movement. (For though movement is not in itself an entity of the mathematical order, it is an indispensable intrusion of physics into mathematics when the latter is applied to nature.) Thus from the moment one takes physico-mathematical knowledge of nature for a philosophy of nature, and asks of it an ontological explanation of sensible reality, it is clear one heads inevitably towards a mechanist philosophy. So, the rigorous mechanicism of Descartes—and this is what condemns it as philosophy—was a marvellous yet servile adaptation of philosophy to the dynamic state of the sciences and of scientific research in his time.

In this way, we see physico-mathematical knowledge erected into a philosophy of nature. It becomes simultaneously (because of the natural place inevitably occupied by the philosophy of nature—the lowest type of wisdom—in the organic structure of human wisdom) the first centre of



organisation of the whole of philosophy; and then a metaphysic is constructed round this philosophy of nature thus confused with physico-mathematical science. In this way, we can understand how metaphysics was side-tracked from the seventeenth century onwards. All the great systems of classical metaphysics which were developed from Descartes onwards posited as the outer key of the system of our philosophical knowledge a so-called philosophy of nature which was the mechanist hypostasis of the physico-mathematical method.

But a second moment was to follow, which began with the nineteenth century, and still continues.

It was apparent from the beginning, and after several vain attempts at an integral materialism, it became more and more clear that the things of the soul and—in spite of Descartes—of organic life, are not reducible to mechanicism. Descartes knew it well and that is why he paralleled his absolute mechanicism for the world of bodies with an absolute spiritualism for the world of thought. In spite of many efforts this dualism has never been surmounted. And this is not a good sign for a form of knowledge which pretends to be a philosophy.

On the other hand, kantian criticism has shown that the science of phenomena brings with it no instrument capable of discovering for us the thing in itself, the cause in its ontological reality. And Kant saw very well the incapacity of an experimental and scientific equipment to reach over to metaphysics, or more generally to ontology, to philosophical



knowledge. His error consisted in making a false generalisation from this partial view—for he, too, idolised the science of his time—and building on it his philosophy of knowledge.

Finally, and above all, science itself, with the progress of time, became gradually more conscious of itself and its procedure. This law of becoming self-conscious is a general law of all spiritual activities, but because man is not a pure spirit and even thinks more often than not 'in the senses' it takes a considerable time for it to be exerted. There is no need to be surprised that physico-mathematical science took three centuries to discover its own nature—of which, as we have already seen, the old wisdom of Aristotle and St. Thomas had already traced the definition. So science became little by little more conscious of itself and its procedure. And by this very fact it freed itself from the philosophical or pseudo-philosophical matrix imposed by mechanism. In becoming conscious of itself it perceived more and more that it was not a philosophy.

What was the result of these three facts? The physico-mathematical knowledge of nature which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been taken for an ontology and a philosophy of nature was reduced little by little to its true position. So that in the nineteenth century it became expressly what it already was without knowing it—a science of phenomena as such.

At the same time this liberation from philosophical preoccupations and pretensions, which was initiated by physics

acting at an impulse from mathematics, was extended to the whole empiriological domain, even to the sciences of phenomena which do not yet allow, or which could never allow, a mathematical reading. In this way was set up a universe of science on its own account and according to its own proper law: a science which is in no sense a wisdom, not even *secundum quid*. Such a differentiation in itself represents considerable progress. But this progress had another side to it, and has had a penalty attached to it. At that day, the sciences in question claimed knowledge of sensible nature for themselves *alone*. Thus it comes about that, as the result of a long historical evolution, the intellectual positions have been reversed. While in the ancient world ontological analysis and ontological explanation absorbed everything, even the sciences of phenomena themselves, in a philosophical interpretation; here on the contrary, empiriological analysis absorbs everything and claims to be a substitute for a philosophy of nature. Physico-mathematical science is no longer taken for a philosophy of nature, as happened in the seventeenth century; but it continues to occupy the place of a philosophy of nature. First of all it was confounded with it, and then displaced it.

I would now like to point out briefly two remarkable consequences of the eclipse of the philosophy of nature in favour of the natural sciences: one consequence concerning science itself, and the other concerning metaphysics.

So far as science is concerned, one might say that the self-awareness which it achieved in the hands of the philosopher



(and also, thanks especially to the philosopher, in the hands of the scientist) became falsified in the nineteenth century, under duress from the very fact that in taking the place of philosophy it tried to define itself as a counter-philosophy. Henceforward it was bound to do violence to itself so as to exist not only for itself but also in opposition to philosophy and in the place of philosophy: setting itself abristle with means of defence and epistemological pretensions foreign to its nature, so as to protect the place it occupied against an eventual counter-offensive on the part of philosophy. Thus was born the positivist scheme of science: which is in process of being destroyed before our eyes by the phenomenologist movement in Germany, the epistemological criticism of Meyerson in France, and finally the crises and progress of science itself, especially of physics.

Where metaphysics is concerned, it is quite clear that the arrival of criticism and positivism could not annihilate the natural aspiration of the mind towards first philosophy. Metaphysics was bound to try to put forth some new branches. But under what conditions? The lesson of history is singularly clear.

After the failure of the great post-kantian idealist systems, in which a great amount of work on the philosophy of nature—the romantic *Naturphilosophie*—found itself allied to the work on metaphysics and suffered the same fate; and after the failure of the partial and timid efforts in speculative metaphysics founded on psychological introspection, after the manner of Victor Cousin or Maine de Biran in France,

what do we find? There is no longer a philosophy of nature; the whole field of the knowledge of sensible nature is given over to the sciences of phenomena, to empiriological science. Philosophers try to set up a metaphysic, it is true, but they are much more influenced than they think by positivism, and they dare not even conceive the possibility of an ontology of sensible nature completing empiriological knowledge. There is no longer any philosophy of nature . . . and by the same token, there is no longer any speculative metaphysics.

There is no longer anything but a reflexive metaphysics—either reflexive and openly idealist like that of M. Brunschvicg, looking for spirituality in the consciousness of the work of scientific discovery, in which the spirit endlessly surpasses itself; or else reflexive and secretly idealist like that of Husserl and of many of the neo-realists; or else reflexive and inadequately realist like that of M. Bergson who seeks within physico-mathematical science for a metaphysical stuff unknown to that science, and which is only discovered in the intuition of pure change<sup>1</sup>; or reflexive and tragic like so many contemporary systems of metaphysics where, especially in Germany, the soul tries to find the sense of being and of existence in the drama of moral experience or agony of conscience.

If you suppress the philosophy of nature, you suppress

<sup>1</sup> With regard to Bergson it should be added that his direct objective was perhaps more in the order of the philosophy of nature than of metaphysics.



metaphysics as speculative knowledge of the highest mysteries of Being naturally accessible to our reason. Here we have a case of causal involution, *causae ad invicem sunt causae*. Metaphysics is necessary for constituting a healthy philosophy of nature, which is subordinate to it: but on the other hand, a healthy metaphysic in its turn can only be constituted with the aid of a philosophy of nature which serves as a material basis. The very nature of our mind is involved in this. As we have immediate contact with the real only through our senses, a knowledge of the pure intelligible, a knowledge situated at the highest degree of natural spirituality, cannot reach the universe of immaterial realities if it does not grasp first of all the universe of material realities. And it cannot grasp this universe and unearth its proper object if a knowledge of the intelligible mingled with or overshadowed by the sensible is held to be impossible: by this I mean a knowledge inferior in spirituality which first of all attains the being of things in so far as it is clothed in mutability and corruptibility, and which thus prepares, announces and prefigures metaphysical truth in the shadows of this first degree of philosophical knowledge. Without a philosophy of nature to which the natural sciences are subordinated while it itself is subordinated to metaphysics, without a philosophy of nature which maintains the contact between philosophical thought and the world of science, metaphysics has no bond with things and can do no more than turn vainly back upon the knowing and willing of the human spirit itself. In the order of dispositive and material causality the wisdom

*secundum quid* of the philosophy of nature, considered at least in its first positions, is a *condition* of speculative wisdom purely and simply of the natural order, that is, a condition of metaphysics.

Inversely, without a philosophy of nature which, so to speak, transmits rules from a higher sphere to the world of the phenomenal sciences, metaphysics can no longer exercise its function of *scientia reatrix* with regard to the latter. It has no efficacy either to orientate towards a knowledge of true wisdom whatever in the science of phenomena aspires to, without attaining, an intellectual grasp of the real as such ; or to judge and delimit the sense and direction of whatever in the phenomenal sciences is subject to the superior rule of mathematical entities. The immense and powerful body of scientific activities, the marvellous undertaking of the experimental and mathematical conquest of nature by the human spirit, now without superior direction or light, is abandoned to empirical and quantitative law, and is entirely separated from the whole order of wisdom. It goes forward into the future, drawing men after it, with no longer any consciousness either of speculative wisdom or practical wisdom.

#### IV

Thus it would be quite vain to try to evade the problem of the philosophy of nature. This problem must be regarded squarely and we must try to treat it for its own sake, in point of doctrine. Here the metaphysician of knowledge faces two



questions. Should there be a philosophy of nature distinct from the sciences of natural phenomena? (This is the question *an sit.*) And in what exactly does it consist? (This is the question *quid sit.*) A whole volume would be needed to treat them fully. I shall only indicate in the shortest possible way the conclusions I believe we ought to reach.

To reply to the first question we must distinguish—at the first degree of intellectual abstraction, in the order of knowledge of sensible reality—two ways of constructing concepts and of analysing the real: the analysis we have already called ontological, and the analysis which we have called empiriological, of sensible reality. In the first case we are dealing with an ascending analysis towards intelligible being, in which the sensible plays an indispensable part, but in attendance on intelligible being. In the second case we are dealing with a descending synthesis towards the sensible, towards the observable as such. Not of course that the mind then ceases to have to do with being, which is impossible, but being passes into the service of the sensible, the observable and above all of the measurable, becomes an unknown element assuring the constancy of certain sensible determinations and of certain standards, or assuring the value of certain *entia rationis* with a foundation *in re*.

In one case one seeks a definition by ontological characteristics, by the constituent elements of an intelligible nature or essence—so obscurely that only at times does one grasp this essence. In the other case, one tries to define by possibilities of observation and measurement, by the performance of

physical operations: here the permanent possibility of sensible verification and measurement plays for the scientist a part similar to that played by the essence for the philosopher.

This distinction once understood, it is easy to understand that knowledge of the empiriological kind, that is to say, the sciences of natural phenomena, needs to be completed by knowledge of the ontological kind, that is to say, by a philosophy of nature. For these sciences imply, as Meyerson has shown so well, an ontological aspiration and an ontological reference—which they do not satisfy. They aim at being (as real) and they mistrust it (as intelligible) and fall back on sensible phenomena; in such a way that, to constitute themselves in accord with their pure epistemological type, they are in a certain sense obliged to go counter to the inclination of the intellect.

The sciences of phenomena thus bear witness to the fact that nature is knowable and that they only know it in an essentially unsatisfying way. In this measure, therefore, they require to be completed by another knowledge of the same sensible universe, which will be an ontological knowledge—in truth, a philosophy of nature. Not only do we say that the sciences deepen and quicken the desire of the intelligence to pass to deeper and higher truths, just as the philosophy of nature itself quickens the desire of the intelligence to pass to metaphysics, but we say also that inasmuch as they are knowledge ordered to a certain term, the experimental sciences require to be completed, not of course so far as concerns their own proper rule of explanation, or the formal



object which *specifies* them, but in regard to the term in which they issue, which is the sensible and the real. In so far as it is mutable and corruptible, the latter is known in an essentially unsatisfying way with the help of the vocabulary which is proper to empiriological knowledge. Thus, this knowledge must be completed by another which exists at the first degree of intellectual abstraction and will grasp the intelligibility of the real which is thus proposed to it.

Moreover, the inverse is equally true. The philosophy of nature must be completed by the experimental sciences. It does not provide for us by itself alone a complete knowledge of the real in which it issues, that is to say, of sensible nature. Because by its very structure, this knowledge of the ontological kind—and on this point ancient philosophers were not clear—must withdraw any claim to explain the detail of phenomena or to exploit the phenomenal wealth of nature. From this point of view one may say that the great modern scientific movement since Galileo has delivered philosophy and ontological knowledge from a whole body of duties which it took upon itself and which in reality did not belong to it.

Is not this, though in an inferior sense and only in a given order, already wisdom? All wisdom is magnanimous and does not embarrass itself with the material detail of things—in this sense it is poor and free like all that which is truly magnanimous: and this wisdom is bound to poverty. In fact, the essence of material things is generally hidden from us, in its ultimate specific determinations. And empiriological science

bears on these ultimate specific determinations, blindly, it is true, without discovering them in their essence, as is to be expected of a science that is not philosophy. And the philosophy of nature lays hold of this non-philosophical knowledge so that the term in which its judgments are realised shall be reached more completely: since the term in which it issues is sensible reality. And sensible reality is not only corporeal substance, time, space, vegetative and sensitive life, and so forth; it is the whole *specific* diversity of things.

The fact that the philosophy of nature should thus seek to be completed by the experimental sciences, is a very remarkable sign that both the former and the latter belong to one and the same generic sphere of knowledge, and that they both have a relation (though with different titles) to the first degree of abstraction. And it is of high significance that the philosophy of nature is fundamentally distinct from metaphysics. Metaphysics has no need to be completed by the sciences of phenomena; it dominates them and it is free from their control.

Let us now turn to the second question. In accord with definitions more rigorous than those we have been using up till now, and in the light of thomist epistemological principles, let us ask ourselves in what the philosophy of nature consists.

The Thomists reply, with Cajetan: It is a form of knowledge whose proper object is that which moves, mutable being as such. Thus its proper object is being, being which is analogous and which imbues all generic and specific diversi-



fications—that is why it is a philosophy—but not being as such, or being in its own intelligible mystery, which is the object of the metaphysician. The object of the philosophy of nature is being taken in the conditions which affect it in the necessitous and divided universe which is the material universe, being in the mystery of its becoming and mutability, of movement in space whereby bodies are in interaction, of substantial generation and corruption—the chief mark of their ontological structure; of the movement of vegetative growth in which is manifested the ascent of matter to the order of living things. But we have need of further precisions. We have already noticed that antiquity did not distinguish, or distinguished very inadequately, the philosophy of nature from the sciences of nature. Warned by the progress of these sciences we must put the accent on this distinction, without however forcing it. What ought we to say on this subject? It seems to me that two points of doctrine need to be stressed. In the first place the philosophy of nature belongs to the same degree of abstractive visualisation or intellectual vision as the sciences of nature: and that is why, as I have already mentioned, it is fundamentally different from metaphysics. In the second place, however, it differs from the natural sciences in an essential and specific way.

The philosophy of nature belongs to the same (generic) degree of abstraction and the same (generic) sphere of intelligibility as the natural sciences, and this means precisely that like the natural sciences it is concerned with an intelligibility which is not pure, an intelligibility which intrinsically implies

and clothes itself with the primitive *données* of sensible perception to which the human mind is subject. The text of St. Thomas that I have already cited concerning the essentially diverse ways in which the three parts of speculative knowledge proceed, is clear upon this point. But I should like to insist a little on it.

I should like to insist on what could be called the paradox of ontological analysis at the first degree of intellectual abstraction, or the paradox of intelligible being as it is attained by the philosophy of nature. Consider the intelligible objects of the first order of abstraction. In themselves and *as intelligible* they evidently are not the object of a sense operation. My eye never perceives the quality 'colour' as my intelligence thinks it. But, for all that, these objects humble the intelligence in the sense that from the data received through sense-experience is necessarily derived their proper intelligibility. Colour, in so far as intelligible, does not fall under sense-experience. Thus an angel, too, has an idea of colour; and yet does not derive it from the senses. But with man it is impossible to understand the notion of colour without a reference to sense-experience. A blind man will never have the *idea* of colour.

And that is why, in parenthesis, Descartes hated ideas of the first order of abstractive visualisation. He refused them all objective value and all explanatory value because they are not pure notions such as he believed mathematical notions to be, in spite of their association with the imagination. He wanted to turn physics into a form of knowledge intrinsi-



cally free from the senses, and indeed claimed for it a pure intelligibility—an intelligibility which, by the way, ceased straightway to be pure because it was geometrical. In this way he made science specifically one, by telescoping in brusque fashion the separate hierarchy of *noetic* worlds which constitute it.

And so ontological analysis at the first degree of abstractive visualisation is unable to separate itself from sense data; it abuts on sense data. And this is true even of the highest notions of this order, such as the notions of form and matter, of soul and body. Compare notions such as those of form and matter, soul and body—I have deliberately chosen the highest and most philosophical—which belong properly to the philosophy of nature, with metaphysical notions such as those of act and potency, essence and existence. In both cases the mind tends towards intelligible being, and tries to grasp it: but there is here none the less an essential difference in intelligibility.

In the case of the concepts proper to the natural philosopher, the sensible is not only, as with all concepts, the source of the idea: it is irremediably attached to the idea. The notion of soul cannot be conceived without the notion of body. They are correlative notions, since the soul is the substantial form of the body. And we cannot conceive the notion of body without the notion of organism, of *caro et ossa*, and we cannot conceive the notion of organism without the notion of qualitative heterogeneity; and we cannot conceive the notion of qualitative heterogeneity without that of the pro-

perties which are perceived by the senses—and thus we arrive at colour, resistance, hardness and the other qualities which we can only define by appealing to sense-experience.

On the other hand—and this is another aspect of the same paradox—ontological analysis at the first degree of abstraction, the ontological knowledge of the philosopher of nature, honours sense perception more than empiriological knowledge, and expects more from it.

In the philosophy of nature, the intuition of the senses is itself assumed in the movement of the mind towards intelligible being, and its value as knowledge, its *speculative* value, comes fully into play. When the philosopher treats of the lowest sensible reality of colour, for instance, he does not do so by measuring a wavelength or a refraction-index, he refers to the experience of sight for the designation of a certain nature, of a certain quality, whose intelligible specific structure is not revealed to him. Thus he respects his sense-experience; and it brings to him a content which is not itself intelligible, in so far as it is sensible, but which nevertheless, as sensible, has a speculative value. And it is thanks to this obscure speculative value, which he respects in the senses, that he is able to turn the data they furnish to the imperfect intelligibility of an object of knowledge. The actual knowledge of sense-experience is respected in its proper value as knowledge, however lowly it may be.

On the contrary, in empiriological and especially in physico-mathematical analysis, it is very remarkable that the senses are only there to gather indications furnished by in-



struments of observation and measurement, and they are denied, as far as possible, any value as knowledge strictly speaking, as obscure attainment of reality. How could it be otherwise in the lifeless universe without soul or flesh or qualitative depth—the universe of abstract Quantity which filters Nature. Descartes had his reasons for reducing sense perception to a simple subjective notification of an exclusively pragmatic character.

Aristotle found in the exercise of sight the first example of the joy of knowing. Thus we see from the beginning two attitudes of mind fundamentally opposed to one another. I may be allowed to remark that the attitude of Aristotle is the only really human one. The true philosophy of nature pays honour to the mystery of sense perception, and is aware that it only takes place because the boundless cosmos is activated by the First Cause whose motion traverses all physical activities so as to make them produce, at the extreme border where matter awakens to *esse spirituale*, an effect of knowledge on an animated organ. The child and the poet are accordingly not wrong in thinking that in the light of a star coming to us across the ages, the Intelligence which watches over us signs to us from afar, from very far. It is instructive here to observe that the rebirth of the philosophy of nature in Germany in our time due to the phenomenological movement, goes, in the case of Mme. Hedwig Conrad-Martius, for instance, and of Plessner and Friedmann, along with a vast effort to rehabilitate sense knowledge. It is not my task here to judge of the particular results of this effort.

In my eyes its existence bears witness to a fundamental and intrinsic need of natural philosophy, which is too frequently neglected by modern scholastics.

And so I come to the second of the two points mentioned above. How is the philosophy of nature distinguished from the natural sciences? The considerations we have already discussed show clearly that the philosophy of nature is distinguished from the natural sciences in an essential and specific way.

What is the ultimate principle of the specification of the sciences? Thomist logicians tell us that it is the typical mode according to which the definitions are formed: *modus definiendi*.

If this be so, it is clear that in the generic sphere of intelligibility in the first order of abstraction, the notions and definitions which emerge on the one hand from empiriological analysis, where everything is primarily resolved in the observable, and on the other hand from ontological analysis where everything is primarily resolved in intelligible being, answer to specifically distinct modes of knowledge. The conceptual vocabulary of the philosophy of nature and that of the natural sciences are different in type. Even if they happen to be translated externally by the same words the mental *verbum* signified by one and the same word is formed in each case in a way typically different. The philosophy of nature differs specifically from the natural sciences. Now let us try to reach a more precise definition, on the lines of thomist epistemology. I will spare the reader the apparatus of tech-



nical distinctions which are required before beginning, and will only say that as I understand it the philosophy of nature ought to be defined as follows: 1. The appeal of intelligibility (*ratio formalis quae*) to which it answers, is mutability: it deals with mutable being as mutable, *ens sub ratione mobilitatis*. 2. Its objective light is an ontological mode of analysis and conceptualisation, a way of abstracting and defining which, while it has an intrinsic reference to sense perception, aims at the intelligible essence. And it is for this reason that it differs specifically from the natural sciences.

Thus the object of natural philosophy does not lie in the detailed phenomena of sensible things but in intelligible being itself *as mutable*, that is to say, as capable of generation and corruption: or again its object lies in the differences of being which it can decipher (while aiming at intelligible nature but without sacrificing sense data) in the world of ontological mutability.

At this point it is appropriate to describe the spirit and method of natural philosophy. I will touch on one aspect of this question. It goes without saying that natural philosophy ought to make use of facts which are themselves philosophical, that is to say, established and evaluated in the proper light of philosophy. Because a fact can only yield what it contains; and philosophical conclusions can only be drawn from philosophical premises and from facts which have themselves a philosophical value. Ordinary observation, criticised philosophically, can furnish many facts of this kind.

But what ought to be the relationship between the philo-

sophy of nature and scientific facts? Two errors need to be carefully avoided.

The first error consists in expecting philosophical criteria from rough scientific facts. By rough scientific facts I mean scientific facts which have not been philosophically *treated*. As long as they are illuminated only by the light which originally made them discernible in the real and useful to the scientist these facts only interest the scientist, and not the philosopher. The scientist is right if he forbids the philosopher to touch them, and claims them for himself alone. It is an illusion to think that a philosophical discussion can be invalidated by an appeal to scientific facts which have not been examined in the light of philosophy. This seems to me to be the error made by Fr. Descocqs in his book on hylemorphism.

The second error would be to reject scientific facts, to try to construct a natural philosophy independent of them, and to maintain a natural philosophy isolated from the sciences. This tendency, it is worth noticing, is inevitable if the philosophy of nature is confounded with metaphysics. In such a case one tries to give to the philosophy of nature the freedom with regard to detailed scientific fact which is proper to metaphysics.<sup>1</sup> In reality, one is not likely to reach a meta-

<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that metaphysics can ignore science. But though it needs to keep in contact with the sciences (through the medium of natural philosophy) this contact is not for the sake of the argumentation that is proper to the metaphysician, but rather for his general information; for his knowledge of the world and his scientific imagery which, where dispositive or material causality is concerned, are vital for his thought.



physic of *sensibilia*, but will run the risk of having a metaphysic of ignorance.

The truth is that the philosopher must make use of scientific facts on condition that they are examined and interpreted philosophically: thanks to which philosophical facts already established may be confirmed, and other philosophical facts may be discovered. By bringing scientific facts into contact with philosophical knowledge already acquired elsewhere and with philosophical first principles, and bringing an objective philosophical light to bear on them, an intelligible content can be deduced from them which can be handled by philosophy.

But here a question may well be asked. If it is true that the philosophy of nature requires to be completed by the sciences and needs for its confirmation or advancement to derive philosophical facts from the material of scientific fact, must it not also accept as a consequence a certain law of ageing and renewal? Of course this does not mean substantial change. There is a substantial continuity between the philosophy of nature as it appeared to Aristotle and as it appears to us. But in its passage it has undergone many changes; it has grown old and has been renewed. So that even as a form of knowledge it is much more dependent on time than is metaphysics.

Here we have an indication of the difference in their formal objects and formal values. A metaphysical treatise, if it be pure (though in fact it always contains allusions to the state of the sciences when it was written, to human opinions

and so forth), can cross the centuries. But how long can a treatise on experimental physics or biology last? Twenty years, ten years, two years, the life-span of a horse, of a dog, of the grub of a cockchafer. And a treatise on the philosophy of nature can at the maximum endure a lifetime, and even then it must be periodically revised, supposing it appears in successive editions. This is because it needs to have intimate contact with the phenomenal sciences, and these sciences renew themselves much more rapidly than philosophy.

## V

I have been speaking of the philosophy of nature considered in its abstract epistemological nature. To-day we are witnessing a sort of effective rebirth of the philosophy of nature. This rebirth goes hand in hand with the decline of the positivist conception of science. Biologists are coming to understand that purely material methods of analysis leave them with the pieces in their hands. As Goethe said: only life itself and the spiritual tie is lacking, *fehlt leider nur das geistige Band*. And biologists are beginning to turn to philosophy in their search for a deeper understanding, for *Verstehen*, of the living organism. I only need to mention the works of Hans Driesch, which have done so much towards this new orientation of biology, and the more recent works of Buytendijk, Hans André, Cuénot and Rémy Collin.

The splendid renewal which physics owes to Lorentz, Poincaré and Einstein on the one hand and to Planck, Louis



de Broglie, Dirac and Heisenberg on the other has renewed and stimulated a sense of the ontological mystery of the world of matter. We have significant testimony for this in the philosophical pre-occupations of Hermann Weyl, of Eddington and of Jeans.

The great disputes and discoveries of the modern mathematicians concerning the axiomatic method, the transfinite, the theory of numbers, and space and transcendental geometry require a philosophical determination whose still uncertain beginning can perhaps be seen in the works of Russell, Whitehead and Brunschvicg. On the philosophical side the ideas of Bergson and Meyerson in France, those of the German phenomenologists and especially of Max Scheler, and those also of the thomist revival, have prepared the ground for a renewal of research in matters relating to the ontological knowledge of sensible reality. It is for the Thomist to see that such researches are turned in the direction of a solidly based philosophy of nature.

Here we must be on our guard against what I have elsewhere called 'dangerous alliances' and the temptation to too easy a spirit of concord in which the essential distinction between the lexicon of empiriology and that of ontology would be misunderstood. This danger is especially to be feared in matters concerning the relationship of the philosophy of nature to the physico-mathematical sciences which in their most conceptualised theory reconstitute their universe with the help of mathematical *entia rationis* (beings of an ideal order) founded *in re*, myths or symbols which as such

cannot be brought into relation with the real causes which are the object of philosophical consideration.

But this being granted, one may point out the very significant affinities which make modern science, in spite of the huge areas of shadow that still surround it, more synergic than either ancient or mediaeval science with the aristotelian-thomist philosophy of nature. We do not refer to the sciences of life where the demonstration of this thesis is almost too easy. The cartesian conception of the world-machine and of matter which is identified with geometrical extension, the newtonian conception of an eternal framework of space and time independent of the world, the infinity of the world, the pseudo-philosophical determinism of the physicians of 'the Victorian age'—all these dogmas have had their day. The idea which contemporary scientists have of mass and of energy, of the atom, of mutations due to radio-activity, of the periodic classification of the elements and the fundamental distinction between the elements and solutions and composites: these ideas dispose the mind to restore their value to the aristotelian notion of *nature* as root principle of activity, to the notion of *substantial mutations* which is the basis of hylemorphism, and to the notion of an *ascending order* of material substances, an order far richer and more significant than was realised by ancient physics.

Our world in which everything is in movement, even more in the invisible atom than in the visible stars, and in which movement is the universal medium of interaction, is seen by the philosopher as animated in its entirety by that



sort of participation of the spirit in matter which we call *intentionality*.

Its hierarchy has been turned upside down, and time is counted no longer by the heavenly spheres but by the atomic world. The centre of the physical world is no longer the sublunary globe surrounded by the eternal circle of divine and incorruptible bodies: but instead the human soul leading its corporeal life on a tiny precarious planet is the centre, not the material but the spiritual centre of the physical world.

And this world is a world of contingency, of adventure, of risk, of irreversibility: there is a history and direction in time. The giant stars diminish, are exhausted and perish little by little. During milliards of years an immense original capital of dynamic order and energy tends towards equilibrium, uses itself up prodigally, produces wonders on its way towards death. Philosophers have often abused the principle of entropy, yet we have the right to preserve the profound meaning, so well in accordance with Aristotle's philosophical, rather than astronomical, notion of time, of the phrase: *quia tempus per se magis est causa corruptionis quam generationis*. And we may also point out how the natural exception to the law of the degradation of energy (which is nevertheless valid for the whole material world) that occurs with the smallest living organism, shows, in a very significant way, the gateway through which something which has no weight and which is dedicated to a singular metaphysical destiny and is called the soul, pierces its way into matter and inaugurates a new world in it.

Modern science confirms in its own way and in admirable detail the great thesis of the thomist philosophy of nature which sees in the universe of non-living bodies and living bodies an aspiration and ascent from one ontological plane to another, towards more and more developed forms of complex unity and individuality, and at the same time of interior life and communion, in fine, towards what in the vast universe no longer signifies a part but a whole in itself, a consistent unity opening out towards other such unities by way of intelligence and love. Such is the *person*, which, as St. Thomas says, is the most perfect thing in the whole of nature.

While deciphering the image of the mysterious universe that is furnished by the phenomenal sciences, natural philosophy perceives in the heart of what might be called the tragic of prime matter an immense movement of *response*, at first indistinct, then stammered, which becomes, with the human being, a word, in response to another Word which of its own power the philosophy of nature does not know. Metaphysics will know it. Bringing with it the light of philosophical illumination, the philosophy of nature liberates in the scientific universe an intelligibility which the sciences themselves cannot provide. It discloses in sensible reality, known in so far as mutable, analogical traces of deeper realities and truths which are the proper object of metaphysics. A form of wisdom uncertain and *secundum quid*, the philosophy of nature undertakes in the first degree of abstractive vision and in the generic sphere of intellection which is least removed from sense the ordering and unifying func-



tion that belongs to wisdom. It is an indispensable mediator which reconciles the world of the particular sciences (which is inferior to it) with the world of metaphysical wisdom, which it obeys. It is here, at the basis and beginning of our human knowledge, in the heart of the sensible and changeable manifold that the great law of the hierarchical and dynamic organisation of knowledge comes into play. And on it, depend for us the appetite and the good of intellectual unity.

## PHILOSOPHY IN FAITH

*Ita ergo philosophandum est in fide*

JOHN OF ST. THOMAS

### I

Western civilisation may well be aware of the several precious gifts belonging to the spiritual order that it has given to the community of mankind. One of these gifts is the *pure sense* of speculative truth. Greek philosophy and Aristotle began to teach us the absolute value of complete detachment from affective inclination, of the severity and purity of a chaste science whose unique function and end is to discern that which is, to *see*. And later the West preserved for long in its conception of knowledge a sense of the dignity of speculative truth, because it knew that the Word of God came into the world so as to give witness to truth, and that eternal life is an eternal vision: and also because it was fashioned in the scholastic discipline and in its rigorous intellectualism.

This sense was lost to the modern world in all save in the order of knowledge in which it was really master, I mean, the order of the phenomenal sciences. In my first discussion I remarked that at the time of the Renaissance a great movement of the heart towards earthly goods was the condition of



the universal success of the new scientific methods and the preference given to science over wisdom. We may add here that however much science may breed covetousness in man, it itself has remained unsullied by the contaminations of desire. In the modern world science has been the last refuge of sanctity and truth and spirituality. This spirituality is not efficacious because it is not a spirituality of wisdom: and may be turned in practice to evil as well as to good; which is perhaps why rationalism is in such sore straits in our time. But it is spirituality, a beginning of spirituality, and as such we must honour it. Although the notion of truth may be largely diminished in it, although with it the temptation to yield to practice is carried to its extreme limit, there exists in phenomenal and physico-mathematical science a dignity and virtue which are in their nature holy and which, in spite of everything, follow their inner inclinations to a speculative truth, which is in itself independent of human interests and cares.

Nevertheless, the purity and chastity of knowledge has a much higher sanction in wisdom than in the sciences. Metaphysics is more perfectly speculative than the philosophy of nature and the sciences of phenomena. And if the superior forms of wisdom (theology and the wisdom of grace) by virtue of their very superiority are at the same time speculative and practical, they are first of all and principally speculative. It is through contemplation of the subsistent Life and Love that they penetrate to the innermost depths of human life and human interests. They are practical because in the self-revealing light of Uncreated Reality human action also is

seen to be directed beyond time to the vision of God, and to be subject to divine rules.<sup>1</sup> The thinkers of antiquity took great care to insist that mystical contemplation is strictly speaking a form of knowledge, a science and the highest science, though in its mode obscure.

It remained for us in our wretchedness to reproach Greek and mediaeval thought for their pure idea of science and intellectuality, which is one of the titles that justify the existence of the West: and to conceive of a wisdom which is a negation and annihilation of speculative values. From this point of view, pragmatism was a particularly morbid phenomenon in Western civilisation. As philosophical doctrine it only enjoyed a passing existence. But we already see the birth of certain conceptions which degrade the spirit even more, and which are in truth materialism integrated into the very exercise of thought. The last refuge of spirituality (of which I have already spoken) which the sciences of phenomena provide in the modern world is itself in danger of being carried. Wherever the Social Class, or the mysticisms of Party or of State are erected into an absolute, science as well as philosophy are in danger of falling under the control of a sort of dynamism of the human collectivity, whether of class or race or nation.

<sup>1</sup> *Magis est (sacra doctrina) speculativa quam practica: quia principalius agit de rebus divinis quam de actibus humanis: de quibus agit secundum quod per eos ordinatur homo ad perfectam Dei cognitionem: in qua aeterna beatitudo consistit. (Sum. theol., I, 1, 5).* And of the gift of wisdom which is both speculative and practical St. Thomas says: *Per divina judicat de humanis, per divinas regulas dirigens actus humanos (Ibid., II-II, 45, 3).*



It should be scarcely necessary to add that pragmatism as a subconscious disposition or tendency has not exhausted its effect even on the higher regions of our culture.

For instance how can we explain, in the neo-protestantism of Karl Barth, the contempt we find for the speculative order (which is confused with the 'spectacular') save through the fact that speculative knowledge itself is defined by relation to action: as though it were a refusal to act, a refusal to commit oneself, a defection before the drama of existence and of destiny, a sort of withdrawal to a place of academic judgment. Speculative knowledge may well show this character amongst those who misuse it, among those who like to be spectators, or are the dupes of a want of humanity which they mistake for grandeur. They make use of speculative knowledge in a wrong sense and with the wrong object, by applying it to matters of action and of conflict, so as to halt their action in the contemplation of possibilities and to shake a learned head at those who are engaged in the conflict. But speculative knowledge is something wholly different, and has to do with the answer made to the generosity of being by a generous spirit which lives in the supra-temporal life of truth. And it has therefore the most intimate relation with the existence of a being who does not live by bread alone and who by his very essence has need of that which is not useful. It aids, directs, enlightens the obligations and the elections with which he sows the field of life during his years of freedom.

And again, how are we to explain the inveterate distrust—

especially among the Catholic clergy and those whose profession it is to teach—of the wisdom that is offered by the Angelic Doctor. This distrust does not come from a contrary philosophical or theological conviction, which is the result of serious and ripe reflexion and meditation. Were it so, it would merit our respect. It comes from a preliminary refusal, from an infra-intellectual prejudice against wisdom and speculative knowledge. The universe of such materialised minds can only assimilate what is visibly and immediately of use for action. Hence the supra-temporal wisdom whose principles were formulated for them by a Doctor of a past age is inevitably as useless in their eyes as the arm of a corpse.

If we make an effort to analyse the slow historical process which has led us to the disorder (as well as to the promise) of our time, I believe we shall recognise the ambivalence of such a process, and distinguish in its causes two moments of very different character.

The first is this: Man forgot that God has the first initiative always in the order of the good, and forgot that the descending movement of divine plenitude in us is primary in relation to our movement of ascent. He sought to treat this second movement as primary, and himself to take the first initiative in the line of goodness. Thus the movement of ascent was necessarily separated from the movement of grace. That is why the age in question was an age of dualism, of schism, of division, an age of anthropocentric humanism cut off from the Incarnation; an age in which science finally carried the



day against wisdom, and the effort of progress turned to the destruction of human values.

But on the other hand, obscured by these consequences of error, a certain divine exigence was at work in the same age of history. These things are not easy to express, and it will be easier presently to sense my meaning. But let me say here that during this period a sort of rehabilitation of the creature was going on, a growing awareness and a practical discovery of the peculiar dignity of that which is hidden in the mystery of human nature. 'Man's heart is hollow' said Pascal, 'and full of filth.' But this very hollow is so deep that God himself or death await one at the end. In short, the radical vice of anthropocentric humanism was that of being anthropocentric, not of being humanism.

Hence it is not enough to say (as we did in the first paper) that the christian world of the Middle Ages was traversed by a twofold continuous movement of the descent of God to man and the ascent of man to God. Such a twofold movement which is the consequence and manifestation of the law of the Incarnation, is essential to every christian age, and we know that several christian epochs are possible under the sky of the Church. We must endeavour also to determine what was the peculiar style or note of mediaeval Christianity. In my view this style is marked by the naïve and unreflective simplicity of man's response to the movement of divine effusion.

In the midst of many relapses into passion and crime, it was a simple movement of ascent, of the intelligence towards its object, of the soul towards perfection, of the world to-

wards a social and juridical structure unified under the reign of Christ. With the absolute ambition and the naïve courage of infancy, Christendom built an immense fortress on the heights where God would reign: it prepared for Him a throne on earth because it loved Him. In this way everything human was under the sign of the holy, was ordered towards the holy and protected by the holy, at least in so far as it lived by love. Whatever the losses and disasters, a divine work was carried out by the baptised soul. The creature was wrenched and torn, and exalted in the process, forgetting itself for God.

When the heroic energy which bore him onward ceased, and the creature fell back on himself, he felt himself crushed by the heavy structure of the world which he himself had built, and experienced the horror of being as nothing. The creature certainly wants to be 'despised' that is to say 'held for nothing' by the saints; he knows that they are doing him justice. But he will not tolerate being 'despised'—that is, disregarded even in that which God has given him—by fleshly men, whether they be theologians or philosophers, churchmen or statesmen. With the Renaissance the cry of his greatness and his beauty goes up to heaven: with the Reformation the cry of his misery and wretchedness. In one way or another, either in tears or in revolt, the creature insists on being rehabilitated. What does this mean? It means that he claims the right to be loved.

And could God, whose love infuses and creates the goodness in things, make the creature without making him



worthy of being loved? I do not mean worthy of being preferred. . . . In that pure and formal aspect, such a claim was in conformity with the laws of the development of history. Science undertakes the conquest of created nature, the human soul creates for itself a universe of subjectivity, the profane world differentiates itself according to its own proper law, the creature knows himself . . . yet at the price that we have stated, and to end in the catastrophe that is common to all true tragedy. For humanity took up and continued the movement of ascent which it had known before the fourteenth century only while pretending now that henceforward all the initiative comes from man. The hero of humanism and the puritan sure of salvation have thus led us to a completely logical conclusion.

These considerations help us to understand how much it was in conformity with the proper style of mediaeval Christianity that that age of culture should be the age of the differentiation and the apogee of theology: while on the contrary the modern age was to see the birth and progress of a philosophy in schism, both speculative and moral.

But we have noticed that the modern world has already ceased to be modern. If a new christian civilisation is in preparation—whether it be free or persecuted—it must needs know in its own way the mysterious rhythm of systole and diastole without which it may not manage to exist. The second movement must become secondary once again, the first initiative must again be granted to divine goodness. Though, in spite of this, the knowledge and gains of the pre-

ceding age, which were achieved in division and could not be preserved, must not be dissipated.

There is only one issue to the history of the world—I speak of the christian system, however it may happen elsewhere. It is that the creature should be truly respected *in* his contact with God and *because* he holds everything of God. Humanism, yes, but a theocentric humanism, an integral humanism, the humanism of the Incarnation. At the end of this discussion I shall endeavour to say something of the style proper to such a moment in the history of Christendom. Let it suffice now to say—the context will explain my meaning—that it should eminently be the moment in which an authentically christian philosophy shall differentiate itself and take its own proper dimensions.

How can I do otherwise than use the expression: *Christian philosophy*? To tell the truth, I am scarcely enchanted by it. There comes a moment when all phrases seem to betray, and this phrase runs the risk of calling up in the mind (in the mind of those who are prejudiced, and we are all so) a sort of crossing or attenuation of philosophy by Christianity, a sort of enrolling of philosophy in a pious confraternity or a *bon dévot* party. None the less, Pope Leo XIII employed the phrase in his great encyclical on St. Thomas Aquinas, and moreover, if we understand the term in its proper meaning, it says exactly what it means: a philosophy neither enrolled nor attenuated, but free: philosophy itself, situated in the climate of explicit faith and of baptismal grace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Strictly speaking the notion of *philosophy within the faith* and the problems it involves, can be found analogically, granting we make the



## II

I have already expressed my ideas on this question of christian philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps I may briefly summarise the conclusions that I reached.

We need to distinguish the *nature* of philosophy from its *state*. In other words, we need to distinguish the order of specification from the order of exercise. Considered in its pure *nature* or essence, philosophy, which is specified by an object naturally knowable to reason, depends only on the evidence and criteria of natural reason. But here we are only considering its abstract nature. Taken concretely, in the sense of being a *habitus* or a group of *habitus* existing in the human soul, philosophy is in a certain *state*, is either pre-Christian or Christian or a-Christian, which has a decisive influence on the way in which it exists and develops.

necessary transpositions, in different and more or less non-typical cases. I mean: (a) so far as the 'objective contribution'—*apports objectifs*—is concerned, in the case of philosophies born in a non-christian climate which developed in effective relationship with a religious and doctrinal tradition (here one thinks of philosophers like Philo, or Moses Maimonides, or Avicenna, and perhaps best of all certain Hindu metaphysicians such as Sankara); (b) Where 'subjective reinforcement'—*confortations subjectives*—is concerned, in the case of philosophies which proceed from a soul separated from the christian revelation, in whom the intellectual virtue of metaphysical wisdom is in fact united to a supernatural faith which is only implicit.

Even in a christian system, the notion of philosophy within the faith is of differing value according to whether we are dealing with an organic christian system, or a dissociated christian system (cp. *De La Philosophie Chrétienne*, pp. 55-61; and post, pp. 97-100.

<sup>1</sup>*De La Philosophie Chrétienne*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1933.

In fact, it receives from faith and from revelation an aid without which theologians have said it is incapable of realising fully the claims of its true nature; I mean, without too many mistakes. From faith and revelation it receives *objective data* which deal primarily with revealed truths of the natural order. The highest of these have been regularly missed or misstated by the great pagan philosophers. Moreover, these *objective data* are also concerned with the repercussions of truths of the supernatural order on philosophical reflexion: and here the connexions and echoes really extend indefinitely. And from the *subjective reinforcements* which also extend indefinitely philosophy receives the superior wisdoms, theological wisdom and infused wisdom, which rectify and purify in the soul the philosophical *habitus* with which they maintain a continuity not of essence but of movement and illumination, fortifying them in their proper order, and lifting them to higher levels.

And to this we need to add that in the field of practical knowledge, philosophy would not only fail to reach its maturity, but it would even fail to exist as a science, in the precise Aristotelian sense of this word,<sup>1</sup> would fail to exist as

<sup>1</sup>The word science takes on a diminished meaning when it passes over into the practical order. And yet the practical sciences are authentic sciences—involving a group of certitudes organically bound together, assigning principles and causes in a certain objective field. These sciences are essentially practical because of their object which is a work or action *to be performed*. Though they belong to a genus opposed to the speculative genus, they retain a speculative element up to the point at which practical knowledge ceases to be a science and becomes prudence. (Need I note here that recognition of the legitimacy of practical knowledge has



(practical) knowledge stabilised in truth in an organic and sufficient manner, unless it recognised the truths of faith. Moral philosophy adequately considered would then only be a philosophy 'subalternated' to theology.

These positions, which I believe to be correct, show that the expression 'Christian philosophy' indicates not an essence in itself but a complex: an essence taken in a certain state, under conditions of performance, of existence and of life, for or against which one is in fact obliged to make a choice.

These positions have been the object of various criticisms. It would take too long to examine them all in detail, but I should like to say a few words about certain of them. First of all it is quite clear that the views I advance involve the conception of a certain synergic and vital union of philosophy with faith and theology, and a declaration that this union is practically indispensable (as a condition, though not fully sufficing) for a development of philosophy in the strict and formal line of truth.<sup>1</sup> We must accordingly admit that they are likely to offend cartesian ears.

nothing in common with the pragmatism already spoken of, which involves the rejection of speculative knowledge, or a claim to bring it under the law of the practical intellect. So that, in destroying science pragmatism goes on to destroy practical science. Because in practical science in so far as it is science—whether speculatively practical or practically practical—there still remains in a greater or less degree something of the speculative order which pragmatism destroys.)

<sup>1</sup>Concerning the way in which I think we ought to conceive the effective progress of philosophy, see *The Degrees of Knowledge* and *Sept Leçons sur L'Etre* (first lesson).

They also displease M. Maurice Blondel. M. Blondel deserves our homage for his life struggle against the idea of a *separated* philosophy. The present writer too has worked in the same sense, though from a different point of view. And hence well disposed folk, seeing that he and I are in agreement on this conclusion, have been astonished that neither of us has proclaimed a general conciliation of our doctrines.

But M. Blondel is a philosopher, and he rightly considers principles as much as and more than conclusions: and the incompatibility of his principles and of mine must be admitted.

In so far as I understand his position<sup>1</sup> I think that he claims

<sup>1</sup>I refer myself here to M. Blondel's work, *Le Problème de la Philosophie Catholique*, as well as to the notes he published in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* (October–December 1931) and in the bulletin of the *Société d'Etudes Philosophiques* of Marseilles (May 1933). His two volumes on *La Pensée* had not appeared when these pages were written. I can see nothing in them which calls for a modification of the opinion expressed here about Blondel's attitude vis-à-vis christian philosophy. I would like, however, to add a few details in this note.

With regard to the problem discussed above M. Blondel considers that the philosopher who sets out to think with absolute loyalty and the proper dispositions of heart and intelligence, and also follows at every turn in the free exercise of personal and spiritual activity, his knowledge of truth, is normally led to that *implicit* supernatural faith promised to men of good will; and to a philosophy of prayer.

Let us leave aside for a moment the problems that concern implicit faith, which I think need to be discussed in a complete and profound manner—and here my conclusions, perhaps for different reasons, would be somewhat similar to those of M. Blondel. (Implicit faith ought at least to be explicit on two points: that God the author of Grace exists, and that He saves those who seek for Him, *quia est*, says St. Paul, *et in-quirentibus se remunerator sit*. But this explicit knowledge may be so imperfect, so confused and so mixed, that the soul may be unable to acknowledge it to itself even when it discerns its true contours.)



for philosophy the title of catholic without admitting that this title depends on a positive influence exercised on philo-

But—supposing (vol. ii, pp. 353 and 365) a state of complete ignorance with regard to any sort of dogmatic tradition—is this implicit faith bestowed on thinking activity as a divine gift which responds to the loyalty and aspirations of philosophising, is it, like a divine gift, bound up with grace under the inspiration of which a soul of good will chooses rightly the ultimate end of all its conduct and all its life? (*Sum. theol.*, i-ii, 89, 9). Is it the soul of the philosopher or is it the philosophy itself which receives the gift of (implicit) faith? Is it the soul of the philosopher or is it the philosophy itself which demands to be completed in unitive possession, as if mystical union was destined to complete and save the philosophical appetite? How can an implicit faith—and even this lacking notional enunciation—not only (which I think true) vivify the philosophical *habitus*, but guide a philosophy—which is an organism of explicit perceptions and notional enunciation—towards determined conclusions and assertions which are precisely those of Blondel's philosophy (because we can take it that 'christian philosophy' coincides with the philosophy of M. Blondel)? Has not M. Blondel himself been guided all along his way, as is witnessed by the constant and often painful twist which he gives to theological expressions for the benefit of philosophy, by the very explicit knowledge he has of Catholic faith and the teaching of the Church? Why is implicit faith called to concur with the activity of philosophical thought, but not explicit faith (which, to be sure is no less faith and no less life than the former) and not theological wisdom, nor the wisdom of contemplation in so far as it is conscious of its own supernatural dynamism and bases itself on a dogmatic system? Where can we find the philosopher who has not in fact a determined position with regard to the explicit religious beliefs professed around him? Is it not to fall into the least defensible abstraction to imagine a concrete thought developing itself, isolated from every explicit religious belief, and ignoring every doctrinal datum and every teaching received from elsewhere and from higher sources, in the climate only of 'pure philosophy' and implicit faith? (vol. ii, p. 372). These questions, to which M. Blondel does not appear to have attached any particular importance, seem to me very necessary and cannot be escaped.

On the central problem discussed by M. Blondel in *La Pensée*, cp. my remarks further on: p. 207.

sophy by theology and revelation. It is simply *as* philosophy, and by virtue of the requirements of its specific development; that it would seem to be catholic: because it finds in itself both an inability to reach reality (a defect which can only be remedied by the knowledge that comes from connaturality) and a void which calls for faith. Thus philosophy has no need to receive anything from outside, either objective data deriving from revelation or subjective reinforcement coming from superior wisdoms specifically distinct from it. To be Christian, it does not need to lend an ear and receive *ex auditu*. But reason aspires so much to the supernatural that that which it can achieve of itself is only, strictly speaking, an aspiration to wisdom and does not constitute in its own sphere a natural wisdom. Were we to admit the possibility of such a wisdom we would be adoring an idol. There is only one wisdom and that is supernatural.

To all this I would reply that philosophical knowledge which, being at once intuitive and notional, has in its proper dynamism a capacity for decisive certitude and at the same time for endless advance, the latter accelerated by the former, the former fortified by the latter—cannot in itself be impotent in face of its own proper specifying object. As we said in the first of these papers, it aspires to a better knowledge not in so far as it knows its proper object *badly*, but in so far as it knows it *well*.

Moreover, it is not Christian only in its emptiness and imperfection, but also by its fulness and in the truths it holds. That is why it constitutes a work of reason which is not only



an aspiration but also wisdom. It only knows its own emptiness when it has reached a certain degree of perfection. And this degree of perfection which brings it to the knowledge of what it lacks is also the stage at which it knows the highest truths that it can attain. It only reaches this degree when aided by the light of faith.

M. Blondel has a great aversion towards Cartesianism, and is right in his aversion. But it would be an illusion to react against the cartesian separation of philosophy and faith while still keeping a cartesian conception of the autonomy of philosophy: to conceive of philosophy in the cartesian way as receiving nothing from outside, as a philosophy that is deaf, while trying to put into this deaf philosophy a christian hymn. Moreover is not the belief that autonomy and liberty, to be real, must be absolute, one of the central errors of the rationalist world? Amongst autonomous natures or virtues there can exist order and degrees—degrees of perfection and degrees of autonomy—and those that occupy lower ranks remain autonomous while receiving from others, just as the intelligent creature remains free while receiving from God. The autonomy and liberty of speculative philosophy, far from being destroyed or diminished, are fortified by their union in the living subject with the light of faith.

Such a problem ought not to be envisaged from the point of view of the social constraints of authority, the penalty of our human condition, or the irritation philosophers have to put up with from theologians. It should be seen from the standpoint of the internal synergy of the soul in its vital

movement towards truth. Philosophy discovers the sovereign rational truths, and the consubstantial thirst which make it *naturaliter christiana*, by itself and within itself, in the immanence and interiority of its own proper life. Yet it is also assisted by the efficacious virtue of the spiritual lights which, in the concrete performance of the acting subject, are superior to his thought and aid it in its task. Here it is a question of the metaphysical mystery of the subordination of causes and the metaphysical mystery of immanent activities. We might as well not speak of them if we conceive them materially as extrinsic constraint and transitive action. Here, subordination means vivification. This very word 'subordination' needs purifying from many associative connexions which weigh down its meaning. Mystical wisdom and theological wisdom vivify metaphysical wisdom, just as the latter vivifies philosophical activities of a lower grade—and this happens in a region in which no human word is spoken, and no violence can be exerted, in the immaterial heart of the soul's energies. Here we have organic synergy but without any impress of that mechanisation of spiritual things which is called 'Extrinsecism'.

Here, perhaps, we should ask how the *subjective reinforcement* already mentioned comes about, and the vivification and illumination of one *habitus* by another. The thomist position is shown in some remarks of John of St. Thomas which parallel this case with the instance of angelic illumination.<sup>1</sup> However

<sup>1</sup>John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.* in ii-ii q. 1, disp. 2, ad. i. (*Vives*, vol. vii, pp. 31-33): *Illa major certitudo quam habet scientia ex conjunctione*



it may be with the operative movements which belong to efficient causality (and which are possible from one *habitus* to another, but not from one angel to another), in the order of formal causality the subjective reinforcement deriving from superior planes of knowledge passes through the object and is explained in this order by the simple and luminous objective light which thus passes from one *habitus* to another: the light which irradiates, for instance, at the level of the wisdom of grace or of theological wisdom the object which on an inferior plane belongs to the specific field of philosophy. So that henceforward the proper act of philosophising is the better accomplished on that object. And by this the vitality of the philosophical *habitus* is fortified, while at the same time a

*ad fidem est participata ab ipsa fide, et ita actus demonstrationis essentialiter quidem procedit a scientia, et ab ipsa habet certitudinem scientificam communem cum aliis scientiis: ut autem subjicitur fidei, et ab ea corrigitur et illuminatur, sic procedit sub altiori certitudine accidentaliter communicata scientiae. Pro cuius intelligentia supponendum est ex doctrina D. Thomae, quod virtus superior aliquando perficit inferiorem, et communicat illi modum operandi ultra suum proprium specificum, ut tradit Prima Secundae, q. 17, ad. 1, et optime in q. 22, de Veritate ad. 13. . . . Eodem modo lumen Angeli superioris confortat et perficit intellectivam potentiam inferioris, proponendo illi objectum altiori modo illuminatum, et sic communicat illi perfectiorem modum intelligendi, quam secundum se possit Angelus inferior. . . .*

*Ita ergo philosophandum est in fide quae est lumen superius ad scientiam naturalem, ex conjunctione enim ad fidem operatur scientia demonstrationem certam non solum certitudine sibi propria, sed etiam superaddita, et participata a fide, sicut Angelus inferior intelligit melius ex illuminatione superioris quam ex sola propria virtute, nec tamen ista certitudo participatur in scientia omni eo modo quo est in fide, quia non est capax obscuritatis, sed solum certitudinis. . . . Illa certitudo non est formaliter fidei, sed participative, sine participatione obscuritatis, sicut lumen quod ponitur in Angelo inferiori non est formaliter superius, sed participative.*

real motion or impression deriving from the *habitus* of faith passes also into it.<sup>1</sup>

From which can be concluded not only that there exists at each degree of specific knowledge a distinct centre of objective irradiation which illuminates the intelligence and reinforces its subjective dynamism, but also that these are in a state of communication by light with one another; and that the *first* centre or *first* focus whose objective irradiation, illuminating the mind at a certain specific degree, is reflected in the other centres, can occur at different levels. For the pure philosopher it is identified with the centre of the determination of Being or Essence, which gives its character to philosophy. For the believer, above all for the believer who has reached the state of union with God, for the soul that Pat-

<sup>1</sup>Cajetan (in i, 106, 1) and John of Saint Thomas (*Curs. theol.*, vol. iv, disp. 25, a. 2) teach that the superior Angel illuminates and fortifies the intellect of the inferior Angel by the mere proposal of the object. *A fortiori*, the putting of the object in a superior light will have an effect of inferior and vital reinforcement on the operative dynamism itself, when it is a *habitus* of the soul which is thus aided by a higher *habitus*. For then a 'physical' motion or impression of one on the other will take place. Evidently this sort of motion could not take place from one angel to another, but it would be ridiculous to conclude from this that it is equally impossible between the *habitus*' of the same soul. On the contrary, thomist psychology maintains that the powers of the soul move one another (the *potentiae vegetativae* make use of *vires naturales* in a quasi instrumental way: the will moves the intelligence and the sensitive appetite, etc.). *Posse unam potentiam, vel habitum unius potentiae aliquam impressionem realem ponere per suam motionem in alia potentia vel habitu, valde commune est inter thomistas.* (John of St. Thomas, *Curs. phil. De Anima*, q. 12, a. 6.) Strictly speaking, it is not the *habitus*' or powers of the soul which operate: it is the living subject, the subject in its substantial unity, which operates and knows by means of its powers and its *habitus*'.



more called 'the soul of grace', it is in a dynamic sense superior to this centre which straightway becomes a secondary centre, itself receiving light. Above it, the first source and centre of objective irradiation pierces into the height and depth of intelligible mystery. And then philosophy is fortified by energies which transcend it.

On the other hand, if this be so, it is because on the side of appetite and its efficient action the soul is unified from another primary source which penetrates so far into the depths of subjectivity. In the end love becomes the sovereign mover of all interior forces, and the latter have in its regard a sort of instrumental part to play. In achieving their task, with the autonomy proper to them in the order of objective regulation—whether it is a matter of philosophising or of playing the flute—they also produce, at the urge of love, something which surpasses their own power and which is an effect of grace awakened in the heart. And when it is a question of philosophising, this (in some sense) instrumental role is, for the exercise of the *habitus* which is thus moved by love, a privileged state. For philosophy is a species of wisdom and its object concerns directly the very object of this love. Thus love removes obstacles, stabilises attention and interest in regions too pure for man, brings his whole being to a more spiritual atmosphere, and finally, by the wisdom of con-naturality which it awakes introduces him to Pure Love in experience and possession.

Not without pain and struggle does this double movement of growth which I have endeavoured to describe and which

explains the subjective reinforcement of philosophy by living faith, occur in the way of intellectual illumination and of the inclination of appetite. Unity, which is quite the opposite of equilibrium or balance, but is a discovery and a transfiguration, is accomplished in the soul when the two centres I have been speaking about begin to meet and join at the summit of being. The One whose attraction pulls on the whole soul is also He of whom the experience throws light on the universe of all things known.

In fact, as M. Gilson has rightly affirmed, from the historical point of view it is thanks to christian revelation, and because it had ears to hear, that philosophy was set up in a christian *state* and manifested a character that is plainly Christian. Do we need to emphasise the objective help which it thus received? Already we have given numerous examples of notions and certitudes which of their nature are accessible to reason alone, and yet which have only been formally conceived or fully affirmed by reason in that christian state. The notion of creation is one of the most obvious of such examples. Let us here consider two others.

A study of the idea of the soul would show that this idea has followed a remarkable course from the soul considered as form of the body and biological principle, to the soul as mentioned in the Gospels, the soul as object of salvation. Now this last conception of the soul—such that it profits me nothing to gain the whole world if I suffer its loss—has made its way into the consciousness and into the notional texture of philosophy, and modern philosophy will never eliminate it.



The other example is even more important. Aristotle said that God is subsisting Intelligence. He could then speak one of the Divine Names. Aristotle suggested that God is subsisting Being, though to enable Aristotle's principles to bear the fruit they contained, philosophy had in fact to have recourse to Moses. But Aristotle neither said nor suggested that God is subsisting Love. This is a truth of the natural order which we have been taught by the Gospels. Indeed, philosophy up till now has only appreciated its meaning in a very imperfect way.

I am fully aware that it is always possible to try to emasculate the meaning of historical observation for the benefit of particular *a priori* views. But it is precisely such theoretical views that are here being contested. In a word, if philosophy is so different in nature from theology that it can receive nothing from it, then the union of philosophy with faith—which like theology makes use of notions and formulae—seems by an unsuspected effect of *a priori* reasoning to lead to a separation difficult to remedy. But if reason of itself and in its proper sphere is only capable of an aspiration towards wisdom, whose own urge in turn is to debouch into mysticism, the distinction between philosophy and faith seems impaired in its turn by an opposite effect. In short, if metaphysics is not a natural wisdom, speculative reason has been given us in vain and remains impotent in face of reality.

But what is this natural wisdom? The fact that a wisdom may be purely natural in virtue of its objective specification does not bring the subject using it into a state of pure

nature. How many false problems would vanish were this elementary principle understood. Or are we to let iconoclastic zeal annihilate the whole order of specification, for fear lest the exercise of our powers be idolatrous, and lest the aspiration of our soul towards God be halted at an inferior level. We do not reach God by destroying essences, and to recognise essences is not to adore them. To affirm that metaphysical wisdom is natural is also to affirm that the soul should not rest in it. If philosophy is a knowledge of the natural order we already have a reason not to be *satisfied* with it, not to seek there the ultimate rest of our spirit. The soul will never be satisfied by any wisdom, even the most supernatural, and however filled with it. It will always be as in a strange land, *tanquam in aliena, in casulis habitando*.<sup>1</sup> The more wisdom grows, the more desire grows also.

In the state of fallen and redeemed nature there is for human life no perfection save a supernatural perfection: and this perfection itself is a paradox—a more perfect soul is suspended above a more fearful abyss. But there exists a speculative wisdom which is purely natural in itself, that is to say, through its object, because speculative wisdom has for its object Being in the mystery of its own proper intelligibility, not human life and human acts. But this natural wisdom comes to us in the fulness of years and is realised as a *perfectum opus rationis*, only under certain conditions and with the help of supernatural grace which raises our wounded nature to a participation in divine life.

<sup>1</sup>St. Paul, Hebr. xi.



Certain consequences bearing on the *dialogue* between the believing philosopher and the unbelieving philosopher follow from these considerations.

The christian philosopher proposes and must propose the universe of speculative wisdom as it is in essence, a universe of purely rational knowledge and of *pure philosophy*, depending only on the primary evidences of intelligence and the senses. So far the philosophical dialogue appears *de jure* both easy and quite natural.

In fact if it be true that the unbelieving philosopher too lives in a certain *state*, in a certain actual climate whose influence works in a different way, it is scarcely surprising to observe that the very name philosophy can become almost equivocal according as it is used by him or by his christian interlocutor. Why should he even accept the distinctions the latter uses, which suppose a certain determined notion of faith as well as reason. He will be constantly tempted to disregard the purely rational essence of the speculative declarations made by the Christian. And the christian philosopher (especially if he is a Thomist) will find himself in the paradoxical condition of proposing a speculative philosophy more purely philosophical and more purely rational than some constructions of his unbelieving brethren, and yet of hearing his philosophy judged as if it presupposed faith in its principles, and of seeing himself set in the rank of intermediary beings like the zoophytes that nature has made as a stepping stone between two kingdoms.

He must do all that is reasonable to avoid misunderstand-

ing; and so he cannot watch with too much care over the rational purity of his metaphysical work and his language. Even so he will scarcely manage to avoid misunderstanding. Even if he went the length of asking pardon for being a Christian and of assuming an air of detachment and of dehumanisation and of passing for a thinker in the state of pure nature, who leaves his soul with his cloak at the university cloakroom; even though he dried up deliberately the sources of his intellectual vitality, he will not put them on the wrong scent, he will never manage to reassure people about himself entirely.

In the order of practical and moral knowledge likewise he remains a sort of zoophyte in whom the natural movement of reason only becomes a *science* with the objective aid which comes from faith. Thus he is suspected by the theologians because he is a philosopher, and by the philosophers because his philosophy takes into account the things of faith. As we will see further on his reason is only scientifically established in moral truth—to which it tends by natural desire—by resting on a higher science.

Is it surprising therefore that the christian philosopher is in an uncomfortable position? He believes in a supernatural order, and as life will not permit this to be 'put into parentheses' he suffers for it. If he cannot converse with his unbelieving brethren as though he and they were pure incarnations of Philosophy, it will suffice if he try to maintain, in the objective web of his speculative work, the strict rationality of natural wisdom, and if he recognise, with absolute loyalty, in



the objective texture of his practical knowledge, what he owes to a science higher than his own. The rest does not concern him.

Be it added that, though it is not easy and flowing like human communications which have been dehumanised and are exchanged in a purely technical field, discussion between the unbelieving philosopher and the believer is possible, though difficult, and if possible, it is desirable. It would only be made inconceivable by a fanatical pretence on one side or the other which denied to the other party the possibility of arriving at truth within the limits of common human weakness.

If things be as we have stated them to be, then the unbelieving philosopher will appreciate that the fruits of reason begotten in an atmosphere of faith, and the christian philosopher will appreciate that the fruits of reason begotten in a climate of unbelief (or of another belief) have a distinctive savour from which each in turn can gain intellectual profit. The absurdity would be to hope to live in the same milieu and to speak an identical language. Different milieux can communicate one with another: to understand other languages than one's own is the mark of an intelligent nature. The dialogue is not between solid bodies in a geometrical universe, but between spiritual universes (with dimensions which are incommensurable before the day of eternity). The conviction each has, rightly or wrongly, of the limitations, defects and errors of the other, does not exclude a friendship in spirit. And strictly speaking the discussion in question is

of the nature of friendship, at least of intellectual friendship. It needs a sort of pardon and remission, bearing not on the object, but on the state of the interlocutor. The unbeliever forgives the believer his faith, the believer forgives the unbeliever his lack of it, and neither is God to judge the other. Moreover, neither pretends to incarnate what in his view is the true way of knowledge, for both are fallible. By what authority should the Christian suppose that his interlocutor, in spite of his system of unbelief (or of contrary belief), does not possess the gifts of invisible grace which accompany goodwill and good faith? Thus we have a philosophical discussion which, lacking the safeguard of an identical idiom, supposes, with a certain reciprocal uneasiness and wise distrust which cannot be eliminated, a true intellectual goodwill. And that doubtless is a difficulty—but a difficulty of another kind.

Perhaps it may still be necessary to reply to other observations which have been formulated concerning the notion of a christian philosophy. M. Oskar Bauhofer in a remarkable article<sup>1</sup> gives as the object which specifies christian philosophy 'the existential situation of man at the point of inter-

<sup>1</sup>Oscar Bauhofer, *Begriff und Aufgabe einer 'katholischen' Philosophie* (*Der katholische Gedanke*, 1933, number 4). In a different and larger sense the author defines what he calls 'catholic' philosophy (that is to say, philosophy whose universality corresponds in the natural order to the truly catholic attitude) by the primordial attitude of a mind which affirms its autonomy in metaphysical research while saying 'yes' to its situation as creature.



section of nature and grace'. Here I should observe that such an object concerns only practical, not speculative knowledge, and requires also the light of theology. Speculative knowledge does not bear on the existential situation of man but on the nature of things: and as 'being' and 'intelligibility' are convertible, things must have, in their very nature, a natural intelligibility, and this natural intelligibility must be the specifying object of a form of knowing natural in itself. Speculative philosophy becomes Christian not through its specifying object, but through its state; and this through its whole range.

With regard to a distinction made by Mgr. Masnovo<sup>1</sup> I should point out that philosophy is as affected by this christian state as intimately as nature is affected by the state of grace. And this is so because it receives intelligible objects from revelation<sup>2</sup> and the object is engaged at the deepest level of the life of the intellect: and moreover it is strengthened by the *habitus* of wisdom proceeding from faith, and strengthened thus in its vital centre. It receives from outside itself, that is true: but the gift received transfigures it interiorly, and strictly speaking is not received unless it is caught up in its very life. That is why we do not merely say that christian philosophy is Christian in the cultural order, but also in its very function of philosophy. Not *specifically* (at least so far as

<sup>1</sup> *La Philosophie Chrétienne*, a day's study by the *Société thomiste*, 11th September, 1933, Paris, *Editions du Cerf*; *Filosofia cristiana*, *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica*, August 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *supra*, p. 79; pp. 90-91, and my small work, *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, pp. 39-48.

speculative philosophy is concerned, which with the Christian as with the non-Christian is in itself pure philosophy, a purely rational discipline) but *intrinsically* and *vitally*.

And yet we are not only saying that there are christian philosophers; we are saying that there is a christian philosophy. The philosophical *habitus*' themselves depend in their conditions of exercise on an organic christian *state*. These conditions may also derive from a *dissociated* christian state (because there are not only truths but also aberrations of which a Christian alone is capable): or from a state of aversion from Christianity which attests that there still exists an invincible dependence with regard to it (for there are aberrations and—such is our wretchedness—there are also discoveries of which perhaps only an anti-Christian is capable).

In the two latter cases the *state* we are discussing evidently has not got the stability, the generality and the coherence which it carries in the first case. It is none the less something profound and significant.

Is it true that, in fact, since the sin of Adam man is not wounded *in naturalibus*? Is it true that these wounds of man's nature, even though they only affect (so Cajetan will have it) the speculative reason because of its solidarity with emotion and will, are not something quite different from the denial of gratuitous gifts? Do they not introduce deep weaknesses, incurable without grace, in the exercise of our natural powers? Is grace in turn not rooted in the soul *per modum naturae*, so that it makes of man truly a new man? All this is accidental to the human essence taken in itself, but it is



not accidental with regard to the earthly existence and conditions of life of mankind, with regard to the way in which man's activities develop and his achievements are built up. I know well that implicit faith and grace, without speaking of actual graces and certain natural inspirations, can animate non-christian thinkers to a degree we cannot appreciate. It remains true that the spread of Christianity and its public teaching have brought, even with regard to unseen states which God alone can judge, a new regime in the visible structures of human life. And philosophy, as a universe of communicable knowledge, belongs to these visible structures. It is because of certain particular historical contingencies that we speak of Greek philosophy, of a Hindu philosophy, or a German or French philosophy. Here the notion of state reaches its maximum of contingency and tenuousness.<sup>1</sup>

But it is because of an event which dominates the whole destiny of the human race, because of conditions of fact which derive from a state of *nature* and necessarily require the making of certain elections that philosophy is pre-Christian or Christian, and Christian by adoption and transfiguration,

<sup>1</sup>Still it does not disappear, and rationalism has over neglected the reality of these subjective conditions. But when racist metaphysics bases itself on this, so as to de-universalise knowledge and subject it to the blood and 'the race soul' it bases itself on what is most accidental in the notion of state from the point of view of knowing, while misunderstanding (in common with every materialist metaphysic) the fundamental distinction between 'specification' and 'exercise', between the nature of the intellectual disciplines and their state. This metaphysic appears as an extraordinarily *simpliste* and brutal materialisation of considerations which are only valid—and that in well determined limits—for the 'new race' of those who '*non ex sanguinibus, sed ex Deo nati sunt*'.

or yet again Christian, in the sense of being intrinsically dependent on Christianity, through aversion or resentment.

To Rev. Fr. Sertillanges<sup>1</sup> who is surprised that I have not said of speculative philosophy what I have said of practical philosophy, I reply that the interests of symmetry should not prevail over the law of specification of *habitus*' by their objects. And it is precisely the specifying object—in one case purely natural, in the other not—which makes it obligatory to introduce a dissymmetry between the case of speculative philosophy, which is Christian only by reason of its *state*, and the case of practical philosophy which is Christian both by reason of its *state* and by reason of its *object*. In reality the concrete *situation* of the philosopher is similar in each case. I mean that subjectively he lives within the chime of the same harmonies and receives the same intellectual reinforcement, in the same atmosphere of grace. His reason, while proceeding in the fashion which is proper to philosophy, is aided and enlightened by faith. But in the speculative order the *opus philisophicum* remains entirely autonomous; and its objective texture refuses all positive regulation save that of reason. In the practical order it ceases to be fully autonomous, its objective structure calls for positive regulations from a superior source.

But here we approach a problem of special importance which requires fuller treatment. It is a tiresome habit of our

<sup>1</sup>*La Philosophie Chrétienne*, study day of the Thomist Society, 11th September, 1933.



time—due no doubt to a sort of nominalism in our way of living—to neglect, in favour of the unity of the word philosophy, the fundamental distinction between speculative philosophy and practical philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

I should like therefore at this point to make some more exact observations concerning first the speculative part, and next and more especially the practical part of christian philosophy. In both cases we shall have occasion to show that the notion of christian philosophy carries a double consequence: it demands that we should recognise the subordination of philosophy to the superior orders of wisdom; and it demands that, in face of these orders of wisdom, we shall maintain and affirm the specific character, and the autonomous existence of philosophy in its own right and method.

The word 'subordination' which I have just used, does not satisfy me. It is very exact in itself, I have used it often and will do so again. But, as I have already remarked, it has gained from its use in popular speech a halo of associative images which tend to make it mean more than it says. Philosophy should have the courage to use technical jargon when precision requires it. And so I would prefer to say *infravalence* or *infraposition*, which simply affirm a certain situation in the scale of values, without any imagery which may conceivably

<sup>1</sup>According to St. Thomas there is not *one* philosophy but there are a number of philosophical sciences which are specifically distinct (*Sum. theol.*, i, 1, 3, ad. 2). In the speculative order the philosophy of nature, for instance, is specifically distinct from metaphysics. And the *speculative* philosophical sciences and the *practical* philosophical sciences belong to two different orders, to two different genera (*Ibid.*, a. 4) which have to do with the first and most fundamental division of knowledge.

give offence. So I will employ these words; though not more than necessary.

### III

Where speculative philosophy is concerned the subordination or *infraposition* I have spoken of is a simple *infraposition* which leaves philosophy with its autonomy and does not imply *subalternation* in the precise sense of this forbidding word to which we shall presently recur. We should not forget that, though in the use the theologian makes of it for his own purposes, philosophy plays a ministerial and instrumental role (it is then a *means* for theology and integrated into it) yet, in relation to its own task philosophy has the initiative and works for its own ends. And here, in its own authentic task, philosophy is both autonomous and *infravalent*.

It would take too long here to analyse all that metaphysics thus owes to theology. First of all it is attracted into an order of superior intellectuality which shows the objects of metaphysics in a clear light and makes it say, if it knows its good fortune: *et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis*. And it moreover receives incomparable objective additions concerning the natural knowledge of God and of the human soul, and even of first positions such as the doctrine of substance and accident, of nature and of person, of essence and existence.

But every organic regime has its drawbacks. Thus, in the Middle Ages philosophical problems though they were neatly distinguished from theological problems, especially by the



thomist school, while none the less remaining under the influence of theology: yet were often posed too exclusively in function of theology and of theological applications. And this condition is bad for philosophy, both for the philosophy of nature—which suffered especially—and for metaphysics. Their autonomy was fully recognised in point of doctrine but it was fulfilled only imperfectly in point of fact. In a word, the *ministerial* function of philosophy took precedence over its autonomous character. The mediaevals were in a hurry, and the essential thing was to build up a theology.

But philosophy needs to handle its problems in an autonomous fashion, in function of the questions raised by experience, not by theology. And likewise it insists on organising in an autonomous way the order of its researches, of its verifications and its judgments. We know the architectonic order of the thought of St. Thomas as a theologian. He wrote no philosophical *Summa* and we do not know the architectonic order he would have followed had he done so, though we know very well that this order would have differed essentially from the order of his theology, and though we now have more than an idea of what a philosophical order should be. Too often it has happened that the teaching in the schools has sought forcibly to fit christian philosophy into a theological framework; while the crisis of Western thought threw purely philosophical researches on to the rationalist side. The result for thomist philosophy has been a strange disparity between its internal spiritual structure, its intellectual intensity, its force of vision (which have pro-

gressed normally during the last five centuries) and their external organisation in a systematic and visible form, which has been retarded in development. The soul of thomist philosophy is beyond the wisdom and the years of doctors and old men; its body is adolescent.

Thus we may thank God that there will be no shortage of work for philosophers in the future. A vast work will need to be done in order to elaborate technically, in a body of autonomous doctrine with its own life outside theology, and proceeding in all its parts according to its own methods and philosophical modes, christian philosophy distinct from theology and yet with a vital relationship to it.

It should be added that the essential difference between theological knowledge and philosophical knowledge, and their relative methods of procedure, remains rigorous and marked even when these two modes of knowledge have to bear on an identical *matter*. To this epistemological remark attention may be drawn. Let us consider for instance that part of metaphysics which is called natural theology, or, in the language of Leibnitz, *theodicy*, and that part of the *Summa Theologica* which is called the treatise *de Deo uno*. In both cases the mind studies something naturally knowable by reason—the existence and the perfections of God—in both cases it proves rationally the existence of God beginning with His creatures. But the specific object<sup>1</sup> and the light in which

<sup>1</sup>The formal and specifying object of theological science is God according to the supernatural mystery of Deity; that of metaphysical science is being according to the natural mystery of being. It is only *materially* that the ways in which reason establishes the existence and perfections of God,



the matter is studied, and its mode, are essentially different. The theologian looks at things consistently from the point of view of Divine Being and its communication of itself to us, even when he establishes how the existence of God is demonstrated. The metaphysician approaches his subject from the point of view of being as being and of its causes, even when he treats of the divine perfections. Thus, while both use the analytical-synthetic method, they use it in different ways.

The one needs rather to creep and to linger on the actual conditions of things, to make preliminary inquiries which are not only of the noetic and critical order but also in the order of psychology, ethnology and sociology. He mounts by a kind of spiral towards the First Cause. The other takes the marrow of established knowledge concerning the nature of speculative philosophy and approaches directly the same First Cause (whose Name is already known). The whole of theodicy is virtually and eminently contained in the five ways of St. Thomas. But the manner in which the five ways are expounded in the second question of the *Prima Pars* is formally and explicitly theological, not philosophical. And the philosopher who sought to impose their characteristic style on the discursive movement of theodicy, would be making the latter advance at an improper pace, and one which would soon make it lose its breath.

are common to both these sciences. In determining these ways theology examines and defines the natural capacity of the human intellect with regard to God (whom it already knows). In following these ways in its own fashion philosophy has to discover for its own account the God to which they lead.

The accidental inconveniences of which I have spoken and which spring from the largely ministerial position in which the subordination of philosophy to theology took actual shape in the Middle Ages (they became more apparent and more intolerable with the decadence of scholasticism) doubtless played an important part in preparing the cartesian revolution. It was normal and proper that philosophy should claim the effective exercise of its autonomy. But how did it manage? It denied its *infraposition* and demanded absolute independence: it separated itself and cut itself off from theology and hence, inevitably, claimed sovereignty for itself and turned the higher modes of wisdom upside down. Thus was vitiated a process of differentiation which was in itself normal.

Moreover it is worth noticing that the damage caused under the previous regime was not removed: it changed only its symbol. When it was separate, philosophy did not abandon the theological style and the theological *finalities* with which it was charged in the time of Suarez even more than in the time of St. Thomas: it usurped them for itself. No metaphysical system follows a mode more borrowed from theology than that of Descartes. The great rationalist systems of metaphysics all set out from God as though they were emitted from the mouth of the Most High. And modern philosophy is swollen with problems—cares and anxieties—which are inherited from theology.

The only way in which speculative philosophy can really exercise its autonomy and proceed in its own proper mode and style is *not* by denying its subordination. Rather it must



know it and perfect and deepen its self-awareness—its awareness both of its nature and its special claims as well as its relations to theological and infused wisdom. These will help it to be itself. For the accidental inconveniences of which I have spoken are due to the fact that though this awareness was achieved in the mind of St. Thomas it was only very imperfectly realised in the culture of his time. Truly christian philosophy, and this is very noticeable in St. Thomas, is the purest and truest philosophy. And so, because it is sure of its nature and its position, and is not uneasy about its identity, it has no fear of dealing with theology, and affirms that thought, in a free concrete movement, can unite without confounding philosophy and theology.

#### IV

Let us now make an approach to practical philosophy—i.e. philosophical knowledge whose proper object is the universe of human action, τὸ πρακτικόν, human acts as known and directed in their movement to their end.

Here philosophy must be Christian not only because of its state but also because of its very object: in other words it is in a relationship to theology of *subalternation* and not only of *infraposition*. Because here the object—human acts—is taken in its actual existence and as needing direction in its concrete movement towards its concrete ends.

Speculative philosophy considers man and human existence not from the point of view of historical conditions, but

from that of intelligible structures and necessities, of essences to be known. And though a healthy speculative philosophy is never platonic and terminates at the *esse*, it considers existence according to the intelligible values which are realised in it, not according to its actual conditions of contingency and singularity.

Practical philosophy on the other hand considers man and human existence from the point of view of the concrete and historical movement which leads them to their end; from the point of view of human acts which have to be posited *here and now*, in conformity with their rule. Moreover from the very outset speculative philosophy and practical philosophy are different in type. The first is lifted up towards the Timeless by the three moments of abstractive vision of which we have already spoken; the second redescends towards time according to a continuous flux of thought which, after a process in which the speculative still merges with the practical—which is practical philosophy itself—terminates at the last in a purely practical proceeding—which is the judgment of prudence. Hence speculatively practical knowledge (which is practical philosophy) proceeds according to a general mode of organisation or (one may say) a strategy of knowledge; and practically practical philosophy proceeds according to a mode of conceptualising of the object and (one may say) of equipment of knowledge different in type from the strategy and equipment of speculative knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

But, if this be so, a strict and absolute science of human

<sup>1</sup>Cp. *Les Degrés du Savoir*, 2nd ed., pp. 622–7, 879–96; post, pp. 141–3.



acts, an ethic which is purely and simply true (and not *secundum quid*) cannot abstract from the basic and universal conditions that are imposed on man in point of existence here below. Thus it is not possible in fact unless the true end in fact assigned to human life and the concrete conditions, the actual state of things in which human nature is existentially placed in relation to this end, are known. And what science knows them in truth save theology? It is not possible to escape from the results of the irruption of faith into the structures of our knowledge. For, according to the certitudes of the faith this end is supernatural, being the vision of God: and this actual state—of nature fallen or of nature redeemed—depends on the supernatural order. A purely natural moral philosophy adequate<sup>1</sup> to human action *could have* existed, as the state of pure nature could have existed, but in fact neither does exist. In fact, because of events which are of *capital* importance for the human race and for human nature, such as the creation of man in Adam's state of grace, the fall and the redemption, theological truths are indispensable for the full constitution of ethics and the object of morals is only adequately known in the light of these truths. This dependence is so strong that some people, rushing to extremes, have been led to think that

<sup>1</sup>I need scarcely say that the word 'adequate' is not used here in the spinozist sense, but in the thomist sense, as in St. Thomas' definition of truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus*. What we call moral philosophy *adequately considered*, is moral philosophy taken as constituting purely and simply (*simpliciter*) a true moral science, in a state which makes the mind of itself adequate to or in conformity with its object, that is to say, *human action*.

there exists no moral or practical philosophy but only moral theology: and that thus theology may claim for itself alone and in an exclusive way the whole field of human action.

Here I think we need firmly to defend against every effort of theological imperialism the existence of a moral philosophy which is Christian and necessarily Christian owing to the requirements of its object. Nor does this mean to run into difficulties by being over-subtle. I believe that this problem is in reality of extreme importance both in relation to the hierarchies of knowledge, and in relation to the cultural order itself. I think that theological illumination is necessary for the establishment of true wisdom in morals: but that philosophy can profit by this illumination on condition that it is 'subalternated' to theology. So that the field of human action, the world of man, of his freedom, of his conduct and his culture depends on two forms of knowledge, from two types of wisdom which consider it from two separate points of view. First *moral theology* and then, below it, *moral philosophy adequately considered*, that is to say, moral philosophy which is subalternated to theology.

Here we must give the word 'subalternation' its strict and didactic sense. The ears of some may be shocked by the word, but I know no better word—unless one's preference goes, as mine does not, to a more picturesque term such as 'excitation'. The superior science prepares and draws to itself the subalternated science, and it is through it that the principles of the subalternated science are made evident. I have tried elsewhere to deal with the technical aspect of the



question in connexion with the problem which occupies us.<sup>1</sup> Here I need only remind the reader that a science subalternated to another is not only *infraposed* in relation to it as for instance the philosophy of nature is infraposed in relation to metaphysics and metaphysics is infraposed to theology. It cannot even exist as science without the illumination it receives from the superior science; it is established as a science, i.e. as knowledge which is equipped for truth and adequate to its object, only by receiving the principles it needs from the superior science—for instance as optics receives its principles from geometry, and theology receives its principles, by way of the faith, from the intuitive science of the souls who see God.

Moral philosophy adequately considered is subalternated to theology in the sense that if it is to know its object, i.e. human acts, adequately it must of necessity complete or perfect the principles of natural reason which are its proper principles, with the help of the truths of theology which finally depend, through the medium of faith, on divine evidence. In other words it is 'subalternated to theology in point of principle, in a pure and simple way which is not, however, radical or originative but completive and perfective'.<sup>2</sup> Theology is a form of knowledge, whose roots are in heaven, and which reaches true conclusions on the mystery at once natural and supernatural of human conduct. Moral philosophy adequately considered is a form of knowledge

<sup>1</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne, Annexe sur la Philosophie morale.*

<sup>2</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne, p. 148.*

which is rooted on earth; but which being grafted on theological truths has for this reason a sap strong enough to lead it to true conclusions on the same natural and supernatural mystery of human behaviour.

Thus these two forms of knowledge cover the same material field, and the second, being subalternated to the first, has like it rights of investigation in that field:

But in the two cases the formal perspectives remain essentially different. In the latter, things are seen from below and from a human point of view. In the former, the same things are seen from above and from a divine point of view.

But why, it may be asked, must we claim a place below theology for a moral philosophy which is indispensably Christian or based on theology? Simply because grace completes nature and does not destroy it. Because there is a certain function of knowledge, that of *knowing human things from a human point of view* which profane or philosophical wisdom claims of its own nature to exercise and which theological or sacred wisdom cannot exercise in its place.

Philosophical wisdom can only exercise this function of knowledge on condition that it is elevated or lifted up, because human things are not only human but also divine. But philosophical wisdom *can* be lifted up<sup>1</sup> by ceasing to be purely philosophical and becoming subalternated to theology.

Theological wisdom could only exercise this function

<sup>1</sup>See post, pp. 188 *et seq.*



of knowledge by becoming degraded and ceasing to be itself, because of its essence it must see everything it sees from the *point of view of God*.

In other words were we to refuse to moral philosophy adequately considered the right to exist, we should either be misunderstanding the elevation which is proper to theological knowledge, or else misunderstanding an irrepressible need of philosophical knowledge.

Theology is not a simple application of philosophy to revealed data—as many have thought since the time of Descartes. Were this so it would involve submitting the content of faith to human judgment and discernment. Theology is a *habitus* of wisdom rooted in faith: hence it is radically and virtually supernatural, and hence it uses philosophical knowledge as its instrument and judges it in its own light. It is so to speak an impression in us of the divine knowledge, and its only specifying object is Deity as such. Hence it is a perfect unity, both speculative and practical (but more speculative than practical) like divine knowledge itself. For knowledge, as Cajetan says, divides first of all into created and uncreated knowledge, before created knowledge in its turn is divided into speculative and practical. And it is from the first member of this division, from uncreated knowledge, that theology derives.

Thus, moral theology is in no sense simply moral philosophy enriched by the data of faith. Nor is it moral philosophy as enlightened and elevated by faith. There can only be a moral philosophy truly enlightened and elevated

by faith if there is a pre-existing science, theology, having revelation for its proper light, and to which moral philosophy is linked.<sup>1</sup> Moral *theology* bears on human conduct, but it is not specified or limited by this object. Its judgment on human conduct is perfect and profound precisely because it transcends all philosophy and all created knowledge and specification. It judges human things in a divine and not a human light; in no sense is it a moral *philosophy*.

On the other hand, there ought to be a moral philosophy. By its very nature human wisdom craves to have a practical knowledge of the things that concern man as it craves to have a speculative knowledge of the things of heaven and earth. The primordial division of created knowledge is into the speculative and practical genera. And thus there is nothing more radical in created science than this requirement of a practical science which is generically distinct from speculative science. Are we to say that this natural need disappears when theology comes along? No, it *cannot* disappear. There must be a created way of knowing which is specified and limited by this object, human conduct, and commensurate

<sup>1</sup>'A philosophical form of knowledge cannot be elevated by faith in the order of specification itself, unless it be subalternated to a theological science which is—as really happens—a created participation of divine knowledge.' *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 124. Thus, moral philosophy is not only enlightened and elevated by faith in the order of its exercise, and so as better to fulfil a purely philosophical task, as is the case for speculative philosophy. It passes beyond the proper limits of philosophy in the order of specification itself and completes, because of its object, the natural principles of practical reason with truths and principles which it gets from a science founded in faith, and which uses natural principles and premises in a formally supra-philosophical way.



with it. This way of knowing needs to be completed and elevated in its principles by the enlightenment of faith: which means that it must, as we have seen, be subalternated to theology. For all that, it does not lose its proper function or its appropriate point of view.

I have already noticed that an essential difference in formal points of view is what makes the difference between moral theology and moral philosophy adequately considered. The vital point here is what the ancients called *lumen sub quo* or *ratio formalis sub qua*, that is to say, the objective light in which human conduct is considered, or the *style* of knowing. There is much that is human in theology, but all that is human is ministerial and instrumental. Its viewpoint on reality is formally a divine viewpoint. Its style is formally sacred, is the style of revelation. Its objective light derives from the *lumen divinum*, and is the light of divine revelation. All that it knows (human acts included), it knows in its connexion with revealed data and as uttered by the word of God.

But in moral philosophy the human element is not instrumental. The viewpoint of moral philosophy adequately considered is a human viewpoint—concretely and integrally human and therefore, of course, including also what is divine in man. Its style is a profane style, is the style of reason. Its objective light is that of the principles of practical reason which advance knowledge to action, and which for this purpose lend faith in the process to the truths of theology. It knows human acts in their connexion with the object of

rational research and discovery—in so far as their regulation by human reason constitutes a special universe of (practical) understanding—which only becomes a universe of science if reason listens to theology<sup>1</sup> and thus is aided and completed so as to conduct its natural task.

It follows that the same realities are scrutinised in both cases from formally different viewpoints. For a difference in objective lights or mental perspectives normally brings with it a diversity in the aspects under which reality is seen.<sup>2</sup> I have already said that the domain of human action concerns both moral theology and moral philosophy adequately

<sup>1</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, pp. 148–9.

<sup>2</sup>Having remarked that in the distinction of the sciences the *rationes formales ipsarum rerum* are necessarily accompanied by *rationes formales scibilium*, Cajetan adds (in *Logic Arist.*, Lyons edition, p. 498) that absolutely speaking the *distinctio scibilis* follows the *distinctio entis*, but that *in ordine ad scientiam distinctio scibilis talem distinctionem entis (scilicet in ens quantum, et mobile, etc.) comitatur ut prius (in genere causae formalis) suum posterius*.

In other words, to every special objective light (*ratio objecti ut objectum*) normally corresponds a special perspective of reality (*ratio objecti ut res*), but *in ordine ad scientiam* it is the objective light which is prior in the office of formal specification.

Sciences which have—generically—the same *ratio formalis objecti ut res*, the same formal perspective of reality—I mean which answer to a same generic appeal of intelligibility issuing from the *res*, but whose objective light or formal perspective of conceptualisation (*ratio formalis objecti ut objectum*) is different, thus involve—specifically—by reason of this diversity of objective lights, formal perspectives of reality of a secondary kind which bring to light different aspects of the real. It is in this way, I think, that we must understand the distinction between the sciences of nature and the philosophy of nature, and the title of *sciences of phenomena* which applies to the first in contradistinction to the second (cp. *La Philosophie de la Nature*, Paris, Tequi, 1935).



considered. But the problems posed and resolved by each throughout this domain will always differ either with regard to the question posed, or at least with regard to the formal perspective.

Moral *philosophy* will not contain a treatise on the infused virtues, or on original sin and grace, or on mortal sin and venial sin. As it also has to do with these realities, it will assume the existence of theological treatises on these matters. Moral *theology* will not contain a treatise on political science pure and simple<sup>1</sup> nor will it undertake a study of the cultural connexions of the Greek and Buddhist worlds, or the influence of class and nation on the temporal welfare of modern states. When it comes to judge of such questions it will judge them as matters scientifically elaborated in the first place by moral *philosophy*.

In the case of moral theology the supernatural last end will be considered above all from the standpoint of the sharing of intimate life of God. In the case of moral philosophy it will be judged primarily from the point of view of the completion it brings to human nature. (Which, by the way, does

<sup>1</sup>By political science pure and simple I mean that which deals with politics politically, or from the point of view of the ordering of man towards temporal and political life, *quatenus homo ordinatur ad convictum politicum*. If a theologian writes a treatise *de re politica*, as Bañez wrote a treatise *de jure*, it will be written from the point of view of the ordering of man to spiritual and supernatural good *respectu boni spiritualis*. In other words, in such circumstances political science will not be treated politically but theologically, and the treatise will be theologico-political. Such a treatise is not bound to remain in the heights: it can descend to the lowest details: but it will always be concerned with details considered from its own formal viewpoint. See post, p. 120, note 1; p. 180, note 1.

not mean that theology does not consider this last aspect.) St. Thomas, in the *Prima Secundae*, as in the Third book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, sets out from human experience and rises to the object of beatitude, as in the *Prima Pars* he starts with the experience of the conditions of things so as to reach the First Cause. The method of theology, like that of philosophy, is analytico-synthetic. But just as the style of theodicy is quite different from that of theology in the rational approach, each makes towards the same conclusion of God's existence, similarly the style of moral philosophy adequately considered is quite different from that of theology (and much closer to the ground) in the rational approach enlightened by faith which each makes towards the same determination of true beatitude. The first difference worth mentioning is in brief that the theologian knows immediately that man can enjoy perfect beatitude:<sup>1</sup> and that itself is a matter of inquiry for philosophy.<sup>2</sup> After getting at probabilities and lines of convergence through an ethical and metaphysical analysis of men's behaviour, their religions, their suffering, their vices,

<sup>1</sup>If we study and compare carefully article 1, q. 12, of the *Prima Pars* and article 8, q. 3, of the *Prima secundae* of the *Summa theologica*, we can see that man's ability to reach perfect beatitude is precisely what St. Thomas presupposes as being of faith. Cp. *Degrés du Savoir*, note, pp. 562 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>I mean as far as the proper method of the philosopher is concerned. Because if his practical knowledge is subalternated to theology he, too, knows from the beginning that man can enjoy perfect beatitude. But the particular style of moral philosophy insists that this knowledge should only be brought into play so as to make stable and certain an enquiry conducted philosophically.



their spirituality, their art, etc., he will only arrive at certainty thanks to the faith *within which* he philosophises, and thanks to the subalternation of his practical knowledge to theological knowledge, and because he receives this certainty from the theologian. In his science an essential part is played by the beatific vision, man's ultimate supernatural end, and yet it is not for him to treat of these subjects. He takes it for granted that that has been done by the theologian.

Generally speaking, theology considers human things, even in their most natural character and moments, in function of the mystery of divine life. And moral philosophy considers human things even in their most supernatural character and moments in function of the mystery of created existence. Theology considers human conduct, alike in its natural and temporal ends, and in its eternal and supernatural end, primarily according to the ordination of man's life to the supernatural end which is the perfect knowledge of God. Moral philosophy adequately considered considers human conduct with its eternal and supernatural end, and its natural and temporal end primarily according as the life of man, without being in a state of pure nature, is ordered to a natural end and to temporal work, which are elevated but not abolished by their reference to the ultimate supernatural end. And this distinction is imposed on us because nature and grace are two worlds of different kinds which come together in man, one perfecting the other but not destroying it.

There are other characteristics which correspond to these differences of formal perspective (objective light and formal

perspective of reality). Practical wisdom of the theological order is, like all theology, *orientated* towards supernatural truth and must enter into uninterrupted connexion with the beatific vision; while practical wisdom of the philosophical order is orientated towards a use of rational truths in conformity with the ends of man, that is to say, towards the organisation or moral 'composition' of the truths of experience and reason, completed by knowledge received from theology. The former is centred on revealed truth, and however far its theological conclusions may extend, its main object is to penetrate more and more deeply into the mysteries of faith. The latter is centred on the mystery of man and the drama of his life as a creature of flesh and spirit.

And the questions that arise for discussion differ also in the two cases. Of course many questions that are relevant to profane practical wisdom are also relevant to sacred practical wisdom; and each must treat them in its own way. I have no intention of suggesting that theology ought to be confined to its centre, to the mysteries of faith, and should abandon all the mysteries of the human world to another wisdom. Theology has jurisdiction over the whole human world and it may even seem especially important to-day that it should extend its view to matters of ethnology, politics, and sociology as well as the interpretation of profane history. But at the same time (as I pointed out just now) it ought not to seek to constitute these sciences;<sup>1</sup> or always to treat of the

<sup>1</sup>I have already pointed out in *De la Philosophie Chrétienne* that the *de Regimine Principum* ought to be considered as a theological book. In it,



same definite problems as moral philosophy; or undertake the same researches. And in any event it ought to consider these matters under quite another aspect. Moreover it is often the christian philosopher himself who brings these problems to light, and when he treats them in his own way and in the light of his own philosophy, by this very fact, he brings them to judgment before the superior tribunal of theological wisdom.<sup>1</sup> His business is to be on the move and go hunting in the perplexity of created things; and so he carries on the work of discovery and research in quite a different way from that of the theologians, which has something of the deliberateness of magnanimity. For, were the

St. Thomas points out the supreme principles of politics, and deals with politics from the viewpoint of their relation with man's eternal destiny. But a treatise simply on political science would consider its object *politically*, and would get down to details while adopting the point of view of temporal life.

As Fr. Chenu pointed out (*Bulletin thomiste*, 1928, p. 198), the *de Regimine Principum* is 'a moral and pedagogical treatise for a prince's use, not an organic work of political theory'; though perhaps it would be better to say that it is an organic work of moral theology concerning political matters, or else a treatise of theologico-political science.

On the other hand, as Charles Journet suggested in his preface to the French translation of the *de Regimine*, Machiavelli's *Prince*, written two centuries later, was a typical example of political pseudo-science (springing from a *separated* philosophy). We have still to wait for someone to write a treatise on politics *simpliciter*, from the point of view of a philosophy in union with theology.

<sup>1</sup>This is what happens, whether the problem in question viewed in another formal perspective and thereby transformed is taken over by theology as a theological problem, or whether theology judges it from outside in the way in which it can judge all philosophical problems bearing on revealed truth.

theologian left to himself, he would stay amongst things divine.<sup>1</sup>

If our spirit by its very nature insists on reality being opened out and uncovered in its presence, according to the differing perspectives which depend on the degrees of abstraction and formal viewpoints, could such a diversity of perspective fail to occur at the point where on the one hand we are concerned with a participation in divine wisdom, and on the other hand with an effort of human wisdom?

Some examples ought to be given here, but I will deal with them very briefly. For instance, take ethnological research, the study of the spiritual values of different civilisations primitive or evolved—or yet again the study of the conflicts which the artist has between human virtue and the virtue of art. Are we to believe that a certain taste for these matters, an intellectual connaturality with them, a liking to look at them for their own sake, is not a singular condition of the hunt after the problems which can be discovered here? The theologian to whose mind divine truth is connatural, can judge these problems from his superior viewpoint. But

<sup>1</sup>Why this is so will be understood if we reflect that the principles and premises of natural reason play in theology an instrumental role with regard to faith (*ministerialiter concurrunt*, cp. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, t. 1, disp. 2, a. 6, edit. Solesmes, pp. 370-4). Now it appertains to the instrumental cause to operate in so far as moved, i.e. in so far as the whole of the initiative of the operation comes from the principal agent (cp. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Phil. Nat.*, i, P. q. 26, a. 1, *dico secundo*, ed. Reiser, tome ii, p. 516). Reason has the *initiative of operations* only when it is principal agent, that is to say, in philosophy: and this is manifested straightway by an activity which swarms in problems, and investigations which are always being renewed.



would he have discovered them by himself? Think of the great mystery of the relation of the church and mankind. The christian philosopher will deal with it by moving from humanity to the church: the theologian by moving from the church to humanity. For the latter the central problem is the mystical body of Christ: for the former that of the world and its meaning.

Schopenhauer amongst others tried to construct a metaphysic of profane love. Such attempts have failed chiefly owing to the lack of certain peculiarly christian data by the aid of which alone the human heart is able to reveal itself to itself. It must be admitted that the want of such a metaphysic is a great loss to the modern conscience. But is it for the theologian first of all to raise the many problems it involves? The christian philosopher will find the supreme regulative principles he needs in questions 26, 27 and 28 of the *Prima Secundae* but he will find in profane wisdom and in his experience of pain his own way of treating the matter. And afterwards the theologian will consider the problem in his own way on the basis of the materials provided by the philosopher.

The philosophy of history or what could perhaps be better described as historical prudence is also an interest of theology. But it is also a matter for christian philosophy. Perhaps it may be said that christian philosophy is better fitted than theology to realise the special importance of time and temporal things: not only as means in relation to eternity but in their own created ends and values. Philosophy busies itself

about the meaning of human history not only in relation to the work of eternal salvation, in which it collaborates, but also in relation to the earthly achievement which is immanent in the accomplishment of time. And I think the concern of the theologian will come after that of the philosopher. The philosopher is inconsolable for the irreparable loss of the least fleeting reality, a face, a gesture of the hand, an act of free will, or a musical harmony in which there passes something of love or beauty. One ought to admit that he has his own solution and believes that nothing of all this passes away because all these things are preserved in the memory of the angels: and because they are selected and uttered by spirits they are better thus than in themselves: and he believes the angels will never cease to hold converse one with another and thus to bring to life again in a thousand shapes the history of our poor world. But can we say that the theologian on his own account meddles with these problems? Once they have been posed, they may be brought into relation with revealed data: but they are posed not by examining revealed truth, but by having compassion on the wretchedness of created things.

I hope I have succeeded in showing that it is necessary and right to recognise the existence of a moral philosophy which to be worthy of its name must be subordinated to theology and yet must remain philosophy, and essentially distinct from theology. The importance of such a position *in point of fact* is very considerable. In trying to emphasise it I



thought I could count in advance on the support of theologians: for is it not a work that is helpful to theology? And a number of the most eminent theologians have given it their inestimable approval.

But some others seem to want to reserve exclusively to theology the science of human acts. Perhaps they think they ought to forbid philosophers to enter the domain of morality. Perhaps they want to stick up a notice: 'No Entry' on the problems of ethnology, sociology, politics, pedagogy, the history of religions and comparative mysticism and the rest. No such prohibition is of any use because the philosopher is led to ask these questions by virtue of an inner necessity, an inevitable urge of his *habitus*. He is urged to penetrate into the 'world' of the human as such, of the integrally human, even into the world 'of spirituality, grace, and holiness, because this world is at the heart of the universe of man existentially considered'.<sup>1</sup>

It is no good forbidding him to enter this world: the thing to do is to teach him the *conditions* of entry. If he wants to enter as a *pure philosopher* he will spoil everything. Whatever he does, and however good his intentions, since he lacks the necessary instruments he will distort the realities he wants to know. Or, perhaps one ought to say, he will only know in misunderstanding, his philosophical knowledge of these things will be a scientific distortion of them because enshrined within them are values that transcend all purely philosophical sight. From this point of view, nothing is more instructive

<sup>1</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 71.

than the obstacles M. Bergson met with in his interpretation of the mystics, though no pure philosopher ever studied them with greater respect and intelligence or with more humble and generous love. But M. Bergson, as he himself expressly pointed out, decided to study them as a pure philosopher, and, as he says, aimed at making them the object of an 'autonomous' philosophical knowledge, that is, 'leaving on one side' all inquiry into revealed truth.

But philosophy cannot possibly be 'autonomous' in that sense. Philosophy cannot be *pure* philosophy: it is only imperfectly autonomous: it must be subalternated to theology because its object is not only human but—in the measure in which it is existentially human—also divine and supernatural. And as soon as they get beyond the empirical field and enter that of interpretation, this is also true of studies in ethnology, sociology, politics, pedagogics, the philosophy of profane history, as it is of studies in the history of religions and comparative mysticism.

I am not maintaining that Christians alone have the right to approach moral philosophy. It may happen that such and such a non-Christian may prove of much greater, and show much more, genius in this field than such and such a Christian. I am only claiming that the non-Christian as such cannot attain a moral philosophy adequate to its object, which is the regulation of human acts: a moral philosophy which is in an absolute sense a moral *science*. Moral philosophy adequately considered is not in *statu scientiae* because the science to which it is subalternated is not *in statu*



*scientiae*.<sup>1</sup> But when it is subalternated it constitutes a science—a science of human conduct, a science of freedom.

## V

In the last discussion we tried to establish the notion of christian philosophy both on its speculative side in which it is Christian not through its object and the conditions of *specification*, but through its state and the conditions of its *exercise*: and on its practical side where it is Christian both through its state and its object, and where, as a result, it needs to rest for support on theology.

The considerations already developed are designed to bring into relief the immense harm which philosophy and culture have suffered from cartesian separatism. We must not forget, however, that the birth of a philosophical or profane wisdom which stood on its own feet with its own ends, instead of being purely subservient to theology, was in accord with deep historical needs. The differentiation began in the Middle Ages

<sup>1</sup>Theology will not be *in the state of science*, that is, established in all its privileges and with the perfections proper to its condition of science until, *in patria*, it sees the truth of its principles.

And here let me deal more precisely with a point touched on in *De la Philosophie Chrétienne* (p. 158). Moral philosophy subalternated to theology yet *which is not continuous with it* in the subject is in an imperfect state having regard to the requirements of its nature. If it is *continuous* with theology it is in the perfect state proper to its nature, yet it does not reach the *status perfectus scientiae* which presupposes the manifestation of *all* its principles. This condition of humility illustrates exactly the situation of an earthly science subalternated to a science which participates in the divine order.

and St. Thomas expounded its doctrinal principles. But, to the misfortune of modern history, it was accomplished and realised under the banner of rationalism and division rather than of Christianity and unity. What should have been christian philosophy became *separated* philosophy. And we learned our error by bitter and tragic experience.

Their adventure in philosophy is not without relation to the political adventure of modern states, which have managed to differentiate themselves in their proper order but under the banner of Gallicanism or Josephism or anti-religion. So that, *mutatis mutandis*, problems of the lay-Christian state have their resemblance in problems of profane christian wisdom. In both cases the struggle is between the notion of *infravalent end* and the notion of *means*:<sup>1</sup> or, more exactly between the conception of the temporal as an order of means and ends with its own last end *infravalent* and subordinated with regard to the ultimate supernatural end, and the conception of the temporal as a mere stage in the order of the ultimate supernatural end.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The means are only 'for the end' and are specified by it. The *infravalent* end, though ordered to a superior end and participating through this circumstance, and in this respect in the condition of a means, has none the less its own specification and its own goodness. It is in virtue of the last end that it exercises the causality proper to the end, and moves desire. But, as specifying object, it has the ability (in a non-ultimate way) to fulfil desire. The more it is constituted in the state proper to it as such, the more it resists being treated as a pure means.

<sup>2</sup>Whoever considers attentively the thomist doctrine of acquired and infused virtues will perceive that according to this doctrine the acts of a good man spread out in two different lines. First, the line of the spiritual, when, implicitly or explicitly, his acts have direct reference to the good



The more we think about this problem of christian philosophy the more it appears a central point of the history of our time since the Renaissance: and probably as the central point of the history of the age to come. Theology has continued within the Church. But the world's lack and civilisation's lack in the intellectual order, the lack for four centuries from the point of view of the common good of mankind, has been the lack of a christian philosophy. This lack has caused incalculable evils. Nothing else could take the place of christian philosophy in the task which it should have undertaken and did not perform. When theology in certain more or less nominalist or rationalist schools fell from its sacred position and thought of itself as a sort of philosophy of dogma, adapted to human standards, we may well imagine that this happened so as to make up for the lack of which we speak. But a theological wisdom that is humanist or degraded is something quite different from a philosophical wisdom that is integrally humanist, and raised to a higher level. Moreover, of eternal life and the ultimate supernatural end: and second, the line of the temporal, when implicitly or explicitly they have direct reference to the good of civilisation (*vita civilis*) and indirect reference to the ultimate supernatural end. These two lines of activity are necessary. The activities following the second line are elevated in their proper order by their indirect reference to the ultimate supernatural end. But in the measure in which they are constituted in their proper state, they only refer *indirectly* to this end.

Philosophy, as a speculative science, has for its end the knowledge of truth. But, subjectively considered, it is at the same time a cultural activity and as such belongs, in the historical development of mankind, to the line of the temporal and of civilisation. Theology, on the other hand, as a cultural activity belongs to the line of the spiritual and the kingdom of God.

what really happened was that an inhuman and anthropocentric humanism which was destructive of man took the place of the integral humanism of christian philosophy. A rationalist anti-theology under the mask of philosophy usurped the holy places of thought and in the end left humanity orphaned of wisdom.

In these circumstances one may readily understand the part that christian philosophy is called upon to play in the movement by which modern thought at least here and there is trying to rediscover the order of wisdom. The day christian philosophy becomes really aware of its nature and mission, it will surely realise the field of work lying ahead of it. And one may also understand why I pointed out at the beginning of this paper that if we are to have a Christendom of a new style (which can be described as theocentric<sup>1</sup> humanism or humanism of the Incarnation), it is natural that such a time should also see an authentic christian philosophy emancipating itself and taking on its proper proportions.

The role of prophet has never offered much security and I make no pretence of being able to read the future. But as history is irreversible, it is well to remark that, were a christian civilisation to germinate once more in the world (even

<sup>1</sup>Cp. *Du Régime Temporal et de la Liberté*. Fr. Chenu uses the expression, 'theological humanism' in an analogous sense. 'The drama lay in this,' he says, 'that humanist theology followed a course which was the exact opposite from theological humanism' (M. D. Chenu, *Position de la Théologie, Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, vol. xxiv, 1935, p. 253). The study reached me at the same time as the proofs of the present book. I am glad to acknowledge the convergence of thought.



in a purely spiritual form), it would under the historical constellation of our time manifest differences of type absolutely different from those of the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>

I have already spoken of a double movement of descent and ascent which happens in every christian order. And, to mark the style of the mediaeval world, I have, in the early part of this discussion, dwelt upon the unreflective simplicity of man's response: a movement of simple ascent which reached its crown in the sacred order. But in the peculiar conditions of our own time and after our bitter experiences (for we have had them) a certain reflectiveness would seem to inhere in the response of the human being.

For the modern age has been an age of reflectiveness and of self-awareness. And the harm caused by a torn and unhappy conscience can only be repaired by a self-awareness that is more perfect and more fully spiritual because guided by the Spirit of God.

And such an awareness is bound to bring into clearer and clearer light the special capacities and claims (in relation to human life itself and its works here below) of that existence by way of giving by which love, dying to itself, gives life to all the rest. An evangelical consciousness alone can overcome the tragedy of the naturalist consciousness.

. The response of man to the outpouring of the love of God then becomes marked by a simplicity which is *alert* and *conscious*. Man understands that he mounts upwards towards

<sup>1</sup>On the importance here of the notion of analogy, see my studies on the idea of a new Christendom in *True Humanism*.

unrevealed love in the measure in which he follows the descending movement of uncreated love and gives away all that he is and all that he possesses. He understands that he ought to inculcate virtue only with such an effusion in view. By giving to man morals that are divine this effusion is at the same time a sort of epiphany of the humanity of our God. It corresponds to the rehabilitation of the creature in God, to which I referred at the beginning: and it alone can open out the springs of a new christian epoch in a worn-out world. If human or profane wisdom achieves the work of its mission in a state or in conditions of exercise which are the climate of grace, if the dynamic order of the wisdom is found once more, and placed in its entirety under the superior rule of the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, if science is ordained to wisdom and receives vital reinforcement from it, and if the idea of choosing science against wisdom seems folly, it will be because, in a word, man who has been sundered since the Renaissance has found once more his inner unity by consciously preferring the evangelical way of losing one's own life—which is the work of love—that spirit of leaving all, mantle and tunic and the rest—to the rationalist way of finding oneself by splitting oneself in pieces.

And so we can see that for a naïve christian civilisation—I mean one which was based on the native and naïve unity of man—progress towards God meant to raise a throne for him on earth in conformity with the rights of His Divine Majesty. But for a christian civilisation which can no more be naïve, in which man can only regain the unity of his whole substance,



both body and spirit, by integrating the movement of grace into the deepest centres of his life, progress towards God will (it seems) be above all to prepare, in accordance with the requirements of his love, humble earthly dwellings in which he will wish to live with the children of men and to descend into the heart of humanity and created things, to produce in co-operation with man and in the heart of man a work that is at once human and divine.

If, from this point of view, we look on the coming of an authentically christian philosophy as so characteristic, it is not because we make it prior to theology but because we picture to ourselves an integrally humanist civilisation in which the great waves of wisdom in man, sweeping from the sacred heights of faith to the extreme coast of the human and the profane, will set free all that is true in the human and the profane.





*PART TWO*

REFLECTIONS ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY





## REFLECTIONS ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY

I • My study on *Philosophy in Faith* was already in print at the time of the appearance of an article on the organisation of moral science by Fr. Thomas Deman in the *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 1934, pp. 258-280, which dealt with various difficulties arising from my position. At that time I was too busy to be able to reply in the review, which the author wanted me to do. But I would like to take the opportunity offered by the publication of this book of dealing both with the objections of Fr. Deman as well as with a number of other observations. Further on I will also reply to Fr. J. M. Ramirez who also entered the lists recently.<sup>1</sup>

I was very glad to see that the importance of this discussion was so well realised by two eminent theologians. I am certain that the objections they have raised are the best and wisest that can be made. And so, if they are not conclusive, they nevertheless give the reader the chance of verifying the solidity of the positions I have taken, and provide a valuable confirmation of what I have said.

<sup>1</sup>J. M. Ramirez, 'Sur l'Organisation du Savoir Moral', *Bulletin thomiste*, avril-juin 1935—for my answer; see the annex.

# I

## THE PRACTICALLY-PRACTICAL MORAL SCIENCES.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. *The mode of definition and conceptualisation*

2. With regard to the question of *practically-practical* moral sciences, which was dealt with in *The Degrees of Knowledge*, the vital point of the problem was touched on by neither Fr. Deman nor Fr. Ramirez. In my view *speculatively-practical* knowledge and *practically-practical* knowledge differ from one another *by the mode of defining and conceptualising*, and *their respective typical ways of constructing concepts*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>As Fr. Deman reminds us, Fr. Lemonnyer was kind enough to express his agreement with me concerning this question of practically-practical knowledge. And the encouragement of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange both on this question and on the question of christian philosophy and moral philosophy adequately considered has been exceedingly helpful. My philosophical research can thus find support in the authority of the theologian I admire the most and hold to be the surest.

<sup>2</sup>Cp. *The Degrees of Knowledge*. For detailed explanations the reader may consult the annex of the book. With regard to the exegesis of the texts of St. Thomas on practical knowledge, my remarks on question 14, article 16, of the *Summa* are also valid for the corresponding passage in *De Veritate*, q. 3, art. 3. The science in which the *res operabilis non consideratur ut est operabilis* does not correspond to moral philosophy (speculatively practical) but is a pure speculative science (*ibid.*, ad. 2). In the thought of St. Thomas, it is a matter of God's speculative knowledge of created things. And hence the *scientia habitualiter practica* which St. Thomas speaks of in ad. 2, does not correspond to what we call practically-practical moral science, but to moral science in general (both speculative and practical). The distinction between speculatively-practical moral knowing and the practically-practical moral sciences seems to me solidly based on St. Thomas' principles, though, so far as I know, St. Thomas never explicitly



As I pointed out in *The Degrees of Knowledge* the way in which the concepts are built up to signify the real, the way in which the mind makes, so to speak, intellectual cuts into reality, differs in these two cases. In the speculatively-practical sciences, the concepts preserve their naked value of abstraction and intelligibility: while in the practically-practical sciences they incorporate a train of concrete overtones that tune in with the dynamic currents through which action comes into existence. Thus, the selfsame reality of contemplation is defined by St. John of the Cross as inaction and by St. Thomas as the highest form of activity. Where one says that grace perfects nature and does not destroy it, the other invites us to believe that it empties out nature and destroys it; and so forth.

3. The mode of definition and conceptualisation,<sup>1</sup> according to John of St. Thomas, is the ultimate reason of specification of the sciences. It is true that in the *theological order* this difference in the mode of definition and conceptualisation fails to make of *speculatively-practical* knowledge and *practically-practical* knowledge two specifically distinct sciences within the bounds of moral theology, just as he formulated it. His own plan of thought was that of speculative science and speculatively practical science.

<sup>1</sup>I use the expression 'mode of definition' so as to employ the formula traditionally received by thomist logicians, which is related to the theory of sciences in general. In the special case of *practically-practical* knowing, perhaps the expression 'mode of conceptualisation' should be preferred, in the sense that *practically-practical* knowing is less concerned than *speculatively-practical* knowing with explicit definition. The difference in question is thus particularly manifest in the way in which the concepts are

more fundamental difference between the speculative and the practical fails to make two specifically distinct sciences of moral and speculative theology. One and the same moral theology is speculatively practical for instance in the second part of the *Summa*, and practically-practical in the sermons of Tauler or the works of St. John of the Cross. And one and the same theology has a speculative side and a practical side. But this is the privilege of theology, due to its eminence and the unity it derives from its association with divine light and uncreated science. It is specified by the common formal perspective with which it attains the most differing things, i.e. according as they are knowable in the light of revelation—*ratio communis quam in diversis attendit: prout scilicet sunt divino lumine cognoscibilia*.<sup>1</sup> The difference in the mode of definition and conceptualisation is due to the human instruments employed by such a science which derives objectively from the *scientia increata*, cannot in consequence lose its unity. In the philosophical order, on the other hand, *speculatively-practical* knowledge and *practically-practical* knowledge are specifically distinct, just as, in speculative philosophy, at the first degree of abstraction, the philosophy of nature and the sciences of phenomena constitute two sciences specifically distinct.<sup>2</sup>

elaborated and thought *in actu exercito*—a mode of conceptualisation which moreover includes, at least implicitly and virtually, a mode of definition.

<sup>1</sup>*Sum. theol.*, i, 1, 4.

<sup>2</sup>Cp. *La Philosophie de la Nature*: Paris, Tequi, 1935.



4. Because the mode of conceptualisation is the same in both the *Prima Secundae* and the *Secunda Secundae* the latter, though it treats of ethical problems in greater detail and nearer the concrete, remains speculatively practical in type.

If we are considering for example what can be said concerning the virtues, the speculatively-practical way of knowing of the *Secunda Secundae* defines each virtue by separating its nature and properties according to what formally constitutes it,<sup>1</sup> while practically-practical knowledge seeks to show us how the life of the virtues *ought to grow in us* and that not only through general consideration of natures and their laws (as in the question *de augmento caritatis et virtutum*) but also through the concrete consideration of particular conditions in which they can be realised, and by the recasting of concepts and definitions which this requires. In the first case, though from the beginning it is turned towards human action which is to be regulated, and is engaged in a general *strategy* of knowledge of the practical type, the intellect rises from the concrete order to the abstract so as to define the different virtues according to their nature and to compose the various chapters that deal with the several virtues. In the second case the intellect makes use of an *equipment* of knowledge (of a mode of conceptualisation of the object) which is practical and needed by it so as to descend once more from

<sup>1</sup> 'What formally constitutes it' is not itself a separated essence, as in mathematics, it refers to the state in which the virtue under consideration puts the human subject.

the abstract to the concrete and to bring about the convergence of all it knows (whether by science or experience) to the study and regulation of action in its precise conditions of detail: and this in a way which is not quite that of prudence but may fairly be compared to that of jurisprudence.

And so to the typical difference in the mode of conceptualisation is joined a difference in method—in one case more speculative and more abstract, in another more practical and more concrete, making preparation close to the path of prudence even though never taking the place of prudence. Practical knowledge is 'like a continuous movement of thought which descends towards concrete action to be posited in reality' so that 'its practical character, which is present from the beginning, is intensified as it proceeds and becomes in the act of prudence totally dominating.'<sup>1</sup> It is not surpris-

<sup>1</sup>*The Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 879. The *determination to act* is rooted in the principles of practical knowledge as it is also in prudential judgment. But of course it is not from the point of view of this *determination to act* which is present from the beginning that I say that the practical character of knowledge is intensified 'as it proceeds': it is from the point of view of the *mode of knowledge*.

Where the principles of moral science are concerned, in the concrete volitive-intellective dynamism of the free act, synderesis is the (major) premise of a single movement of thought (a practical syllogism) which ends up of itself in a judgment of prudence. But practical science appeals entirely to the second member or minor of this movement of thought. And if synderesis is at the origin of the constitution of moral science, nevertheless the first principles it contains come into the field of this science as an object of knowledge and of study. Considered in itself, apart from the volitive-intellective movement (the practical syllogism) in which it is integrated in the dynamism of the exercise of freedom, moral science by itself does not attain the judgment of prudence or action—as



ing that along this line we notice many differences of *more* and of *less*. I have pointed out in *The Degrees of Knowledge* the different ways in which as one moves from speculatively-practical moral science to the act of prudence the emphasis bears more or less on the *cognoscere* or on the *dirigere*. Fr. Ramirez has not grasped the point; and has not seen it is not these variations of *more* or *less*, but reasons of formal discontinuity—that concern the *formal* perspective of conceptualisation—which have made us posit a *specific* distinction between *speculatively-practical* science and *practically-practical* science (in the philosophical order not in the theological order), and again between practical science and prudence.

## 2. *The rectitude of the will.*

5. With regard to the rectitude of the will, we consider it as a *condition* of the exactness of the *practically-practical* moral sciences, though not, as in the case of prudence, as something constituting the rule of truth according to which these sciences take their measure. And so the infallibility which belongs formally to science as such and which concerns general truths organised under principles (and not the particular regulation of a single act, as in prudence) is safeguarded in these sciences. Though in spite of this, the particular conditions and the relativity due to circumstances (circumstances of delivery and of the milieu to which the author appeals) are

we can see in the instance of the *ethicus peccator* or that of the moralist who is incapable of willing and acting. *Synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum, scientiam.* (ii-ii, 47, 6, ad. 3.)

much more marked in the *practically-practical* sciences than in the *speculatively-practical* sciences. For instance, these considerations of circumstance and milieu play a bigger part in the true understanding of St. John of the Cross than of St. Thomas.

### 3. Saint Alphonsus.

6. St. Alphonsus Liguori, in a doctrinal order which may appear more satisfying or less, proposes a moral *teaching* and an intelligible whole of dicta which are valid in general even when they concern particular *cases*. And so we can scarcely say with Fr. Deman that his conclusions are only 'to be assimilated' on the 'plane of prudence'—of individual acts to be performed. The practical conclusions of St. Alphonsus were only 'on the plane of prudence' so far as they concerned his own acts and those of the souls he directed.

Are we to understand that St. Alphonsus' prudence made him choose good and effective solutions—and therefore capable of being 'assimilated' with thomist ethics—even though these solutions were in his case bound up with a moral science whose structure is held to be questionable? But this means admitting that St. Alphonsus' plane was that of *practically-practical* knowledge—knowledge in which the inclinations of prudence can play a decisive part yet do not suffice to assure the certain truth of the knowledge as knowledge.

I do not wish here to take part in the controversies concerning probabilism, about which Fr. Deman has written a new and illuminating study in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catho-*



lique, or to make judgment on the work of St. Alphonsus. I only want to point out that scientific textures more or less solid and true are possible on the plane of practically-practical knowledge as on that of speculatively-practical knowledge. What mattered to me when I quoted St. Alphonsus was not the scientific merits of his method of conceptualisation, but the fact that this method, whatever its intrinsic value, is in St. Alphonsus on the plane of *practically-practical* knowledge.

## II

### NATURAL VIRTUES AND CHARITY

#### 1. *State of the question.*

7. We have seen that without charity the natural virtues are only dispositions and not virtues truly and strictly speaking. So that the connexion which binds all the virtues together in one strong organic unity is only achieved in charity.<sup>1</sup>

I confess I was surprised to find these theses contested by Fr. Deman. 'We beg pardon,' he writes, 'but we thought we read a very different doctrine in St. Thomas.' I would like to ask him to read once again question 65, articles 1 and 2, of the *Prima Secundae*, and to consult the commentators if he pleases.<sup>2</sup> I may be excused for insisting on it because it is a point of doctrine which could only be denied if one deviated

<sup>1</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, pp. 102-5.

<sup>2</sup>John of Saint Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, vol. vi, disp. 17, a. 2 ; *Salmanticenses*, vol. vi, tract. 12, disp. 4.

quite definitely from the spirit and teaching of St. Thomas, and if one forgot the care and vigour he has for purifying the aristotelian respect for nature from naturalism in every shape.

I will cite here several remarks I made concerning the situation of man in the fallen and redeemed state of nature. 'Without charity,' I said, 'a man can have not only the false temperance of the miser (which is specified by the *bonum utile*) but true acquired natural temperance (specified by the *bonum honestum* in such a matter). But without charity this true temperance remains in the state of a disposition (*facile mobilis*) and does not become virtue strictly speaking (*difficile mobilis*). And again I said: 'Below theological virtues and infused cardinal virtues, there are acquired cardinal virtues, with a formal object and a rule that is open to our natural reason. Thus, natural acquired prudence proceeds in the light of the principles of natural reason, practical principles which are known through *synderesis*. As for instance: we must do good and avoid evil, we must be just; and so forth. But without charity such a natural acquired prudence and other cardinal virtues can only exist as a disposition, not as virtue strictly speaking. Thus, without charity, they have no real connexion, they are not bound up together in one strong organism, because they are only connected *in statu virtutis*.'<sup>1</sup>

Are these formulae, which are considered classical by

<sup>1</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 105, note 1. I felt obliged to quote my text here because of the carelessness with which it has been read by some critics.



thomists<sup>1</sup> and worked out so as to conciliate different texts of St. Thomas, to be taken as the official teaching of thomism? One has only to follow the letter of the texts in the *Prima Secundae* to which I have referred to be convinced of it. I hope Fr. Deman will read them again. Their terms are sometimes less moderate than those I have used.

## 2. The doctrine of St. Thomas.

8. For here St. Thomas clearly teaches four things:

(1). There is no connexion between *virtutes imperfectae*, that is, between virtues which only realise the notion of virtue in an attenuated and imperfect sense (i-ii, 65, 1). The moral virtues are only connected with one another when they are *perfectae virtutes* in the completest sense.

(2). The acquired moral virtues, apart from charity, are only virtues in an imperfect and attenuated sense. They are only virtues *imperfectly* and *in a certain sense*, not purely and simply virtues. 'Only infused virtues are *perfectly* virtues, in the *pure and simple sense*, because they direct man, as is proper, to his last end purely and simply. But the other virtues, that is, the acquired virtues, are only virtues *in a certain sense* and not purely and simply virtues. If they direct man in the right way, it is with regard to a last end in a given order, not with regard to the absolutely last end.' Patet ex dictis, quod *solae*

<sup>1</sup>But I must except those who are scandalised by them nowadays and find them 'pessimist'. The classical teaching of the school of St. Thomas has recently been expounded in brief by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange in an article in the *Vie Spirituelle* (..st Dec., 1934), entitled, '*Les vertus morales dans la vie intérieure.*'

virtutes infusae sunt *perfectae*, et *simpliciter dicendae virtutes*: quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter. Aliae vero virtutes, scilicet acquisitae, sunt *secundum quid virtutes*, non autem simpliciter: ordinant enim hominem bene, respectu finis ultimi in aliquo genere<sup>1</sup>: non autem respectu finis ultimi simpliciter. (*Ibid.*, 65, 2.)

(3). Thus they are not connected. 'Taken as virtues in the imperfect sense, the moral virtues are not connected.' 'Hoc modo (scilicet ut imperfectae), accipiendo virtutes morales, non sunt connexae.' (*Ibid.*, 65, 1.)

The natural virtues are indeed connected in prudence<sup>2</sup> but prudence concerns the order of means to the end, and presupposes rectitude in willing the end. And in the actual state of our nature, it is not a *virtus simpliciter*, virtue purely and simply. It only realises the notion of virtue completely with charity. Without charity, in the actual state of our nature, we are unable to love God efficaciously above all things<sup>3</sup> and we cannot be deprived of charity without being turned away from God as both supernatural and natural last end.<sup>4</sup> *Ad rectam rationem prudentiae* multo magis requiritur quod homo

<sup>1</sup>'Scilicet in genere boni humani, puta felicitatis positae in X ethic.' Cajetan: or again, more precisely, *in genere boni civilis* (cp. *De Virt. card.*, a. 4, ad. 3).

<sup>2</sup>Cp. Quaestio Disputata: *De virtutibus cardinalibus*, a. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Homo, in statu naturae integrae, non indigebat dono gratiae superadditae naturalibus bonis, ad diligendum Deum naturaliter super omnia: licet indigeret auxilio Dei ad hoc cum moventis. Sed, in statu naturae corruptae, indiget homo, etiam ad hoc, auxilio gratiae naturam sanantis (i-ii, 109, 3).

<sup>4</sup>John of St. Thomas insists on this point in the *Disputatio* cited above.



bene se habeat circa ultimum finem, quod fit per caritatem, quam circa alios fines, quod fit per virtutes morales: sicut ratio recta in speculativis maxime indiget primo principio indemonstrabili, quod est contradictoria non simul esse vera (i-ii, 65, 2).

‘For the *recta ratio*, the rectitude proper to prudence, it is much more necessary that man should be rightly disposed with regard to the last end, which happens through charity, than with regard to the other ends, which happens through the moral virtues. Just as in speculative questions right reason has above all need of the first indemonstrable principle.’ Prudence, so as to be purely and simply the virtue of prudence, has need of charity, as speculative knowledge has need of the principle of contradiction, to be purely and simply knowledge or science. That is St. Thomas’ point. And so he declares, in the same article, that, in contradistinction to the virtues acquired without charity, the *infused* virtues answer strictly and fully to the notion of virtue. *Perfecte et vere habent rationem virtutis.*

(4). But what is a virtue *secundum quid* (65, 2) or in an imperfect sense (65, 1). It is ‘a certain inclination (due to nature or habit) to carry out some work which belongs of itself to the category of that which is good’: *aliqua inclinatio in nobis existens ad opus aliquod de genere bonorum faciendum*. On the other hand, virtue in the perfect sense of the word is: ‘a firm and stable quality which inclines of itself to the doing of a good work in a good way’: *Habitus inclinans ad bonum opus bene agendum* (65, 1). Of course, a habitus can exist as a simple disposition, but in his present definition of the *virtus perfecta*, St. Thomas,

who considers the virtues primarily in the light of the state in which they bring the subject, has in mind a *habitus* existing in the state of *habitus*. Otherwise he would not maintain that the *virtutes imperfectae* or *secundum quid* cannot be connected together. We can say that the 'virtues *secundum quid* or in an imperfect sense' enable us to do certain good things, but do not enable us to live well (i.e. the good life).

A man who is deprived of charity can do certain things good in themselves and 'morally good'—because of a virtual and implicit reference in a given act to God, author of the natural order,<sup>1</sup> and he may have acquired moral virtues. But these virtues are not *habitus* (in the state of *habitus*) which incline to the doing of a good work in a good way, nor do they set up this man in a firm and unshakeable disposition to live well. They are only virtues in an imperfect and attenuated sense, *virtutes imperfectae*, *virtutes secundum quid*, and not bound up one to another. According to St. Thomas, the man without charity in the actual state of our nature is a sick man, and the notion of sickness or infirmity is precisely opposed to that of virtue in the perfect sense. For man in our present state of nature to be established firmly in the good which is connatural to him, and for him to be protected against

<sup>1</sup>Cp. Billuart, *Curs. theol.*, vol. v, tract. *de Caritate*, dissert. iv, art. 8. Consult also St. Thomas, commentary on the epistle to the Romans, in cap. 14, lect. 3. 'In homine infideli (sc. formaliter seu culpabiliter) cum infidelitate est bonum naturae. Et ideo, cum aliquis infidelis ex dictamine rationis aliquod bonum facit, non referendo ad malum finem, non peccat. Non tamen opus eius est meritorium (vitae aeternae) quia non est gratia informatum.'



failure (which presupposes the union of all the virtues), he needs the grace which cures nature. 'In the integral state of nature man by his natural strength alone could desire and achieve the good in proportion to his nature, which is the good of acquired virtue. But in the state of fallen nature man is lacking even with regard to the abilities of his nature, so that by his natural strength alone he is powerless to accomplish all the good of the natural order. But, because human nature has not been entirely corrupted by sin, which would deprive it of all good of the natural order, man even in the state of fallen nature is capable of doing certain particular good things by virtue of his nature, such as building houses, planting vines, and other things of the kind. But he cannot perform all the good connatural to him without failing here or there. Thus a sick man can by himself manage a certain amount of movement, but he cannot move himself perfectly with the movement of a healthy man, without being cured with the help of medicine.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In statu naturae integrae . . . poterat homo per sua naturalia velle et operari bonum suae naturae proportionatum quale est bonum virtutis acquisitae. . . . Sed in statu naturae corruptae, etiam deficit homo ab hoc quod secundum suam naturam potest, ut non possit totum huiusmodi bonum implere per sua naturalia. Quia tamen natura humana per peccatum non est totaliter corrupta, ut scilicet toto bono naturae privetur: potest, quidem, etiam in statu naturae corruptae, per virtutem suae naturae aliquod bonum particulare agere, sicut aedificare domos, plantare vineas et alia huiusmodi: non tamen totum bonum sibi connaturale, ita quod in nullo deficiat. Sicut homo infirmus potest per seipsum aliquem motum habere: non tamen perfecte potest moveri motu hominis sani, nisi sanetur auxilio medicinae. (*Sum. theol.*, i-ii, 109, 2.)

### 3. Conclusion.

Now all this goes to show that according to the teaching of St. Thomas, without charity the natural virtues are not interconnected, and are only *virtutes imperfectae* or *virtutes secundum quid*. The commentators who followed only said the same thing more precisely, thereby making clearer that in a sense these virtues without charity can be called *true* virtues, when they say that they are found in the subject in the *state* of dispositions rather than of virtues properly speaking. John of St. Thomas explains it more clearly than the other commentators. In the state of pure nature the natural virtues could without charity have been purely and simply true virtues, answering in every respect to the type-definition of virtue. But in the actual state in which we are, as soon as charity is absent nature itself, wounded by sin, is turned away from its ultimate last end, and the natural virtues without charity are only true virtues *secundum quid et dispositive tantum, non essentialiter et habitualiter*,<sup>1</sup> as dispositions not

<sup>1</sup>John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, vol vi, disp. 17, ad. 2, No. LIX. "Item s. Thomas concludens decisionem huius difficultatis citato loco ex secunda secundae, quaestione XXIII, articulo VII. in calce corporis inquit: 'Si bonum particulare quod respicit particularis virtus verum bonum sit, ut est liberatio patriae in actu fortitudinis, vel quid simile, erit quidem vera virtus, sed imperfecta sine charitate, quia deficit ordinatio in verum ultimum finem, et hac ratione non est vera virtus simpliciter sine charitate.' Ubi prius concedens quod est vera virtus imperfecta, postea quod non est vera simpliciter, satis significat nomine verae virtutis imperfectae intelligere eam quae se habet ut vera secundum quid, et dispositive solum, non essentialiter et habitualiter. Explicans enim in hac questione LXV, articulo secundo, ad primum, auctoritatem Prosperi, quod virtus absque



as habitus. They are not in the state of virtues strictly speaking, of firm and stable habits, which bring the activity of the subject to a true state of achievement and perfection: though they can be called *true* virtues in a particular sense, or according to a certain abstract consideration, in so far as they tend to a bonum honestum which is in itself a good of virtue (*habitus operativus boni*); actually they are reduced to the state of dispositions. And John of St. Thomas declares himself, in stronger terms than those I have used, they only realise the notion of a good disposition, *induunt rationem dispositionis bonae*.<sup>1</sup>

As my theses on the natural virtues and on charity only recalled the positions taken by St. Thomas, Fr. Deman was rather hasty when he said: 'M. Maritain's thought on this point exhibits tendencies and provides considerations which are certainly not those of St. Thomas Aquinas.' It is clear that without love truly directed to the last end, moral life cannot be stable and organically right. *In the state of fallen nature no virtue can be said to be virtue absolutely speaking, purely and* *charitate potest esse communis bonis et malis, inquit D. Thomas, quod accipit virtutem secundum imperfectam rationem virtutis, alioquin si virtus moralis secundum perfectam rationem virtutis accipiat, bonum facit habentem, et per consequens in malis esse non potest.*"

<sup>1</sup>Virtus illa, seu inclinatio ad aliquam materiam, seu objectum bonum, quae manet in peccatore, *non est inclinatio difficile mobilis ex specie, et motivo suo formali, sed ex aliqua accidentali assuefactione, et sic specie differt a virtute perfecta, id est, quae ex sua perfectione specifica difficile postulat moveri, et radicata est, et sic mutatur per peccatum in quamdam imperfectam virtutem, quae solum pertinet ad genus dispositionis, non ad habitum difficile mobilem ex sua specifica ratione (loc. cit. No. LX.). Induit rationem dispositionis bonae. (Ibid., No. LVIII.)*

*simply, unless joined with grace and charity. 'In statu naturae lapsae nulla dicenda est virtus absolute et simpliciter, nisi sit conjuncta cum gratia et caritate,' say the theologians of Salamanca.*

*4. Moral philosophy led by true reason according to the theologians of Salamanca.*

And they add, in a text which insinuates in some way the notion of moral philosophy adequately considered, that is, subalternated to theology: 'In fact there is no virtue, either for the theologians or even for the philosophers who are led by true reason, which purely and simply deserves this name, if it is not joined with and informed by charity. For in fact we are all in the state of fallen nature, and thus there cannot be any virtue in the perfect sense, even in the natural order, save that which is joined with charity. But when they go with charity, the acquired virtues themselves become perfect in state, and should be called virtues purely and simply, both by philosophers (because they make man tend rightly to his natural end) and by the theologians (for by participation in charity, they are directed to man's supernatural end).<sup>1</sup>

We may well ask how the philosopher knows, without the assistance of theology, that in the state of fallen nature we cannot without charity love God with efficacy and above all things: nor tend rightly to him as our natural last end. The *vera ratio* the Salamancans speak of is necessarily, in the order of moral life, a reason which knows the truths of faith.

<sup>1</sup>*Salmanticenses, loc. cit. dub. 2, No. 27.*



5. *Ratio superior and ratio inferior according to St. Thomas.*

11. Traces of the notion of moral philosophy adequately considered, that is to say, subalternated to theology, can be found in St. Thomas himself—in the doctrine of superior reason and inferior reason which he takes from St. Augustine but makes his own.

Superior reason and inferior reason are not two distinct powers (*Sum. theol.*, i, 79, 9; *De Veritate*, 15, 2; II Sent., dist. 24, q. 2, a. 2). The selfsame intellectual power is called superior reason in so far as it looks to eternal things (*intendit aeternis conspiciendis et consulendis*), and is called inferior reason, in so far as it looks to temporal things (*intendit temporalibus disponendis*).<sup>1</sup> These differences, also, spring more from the *media* than from their objects, both in the speculative and practical orders, because they are both speculative and practical. (*De Veritate*, 15, 2, ad. 5.) 'In its movement towards choice inferior reason takes counsel of motives of the temporal order, asking for example, whether a thing is superfluous or insufficient, useful or right; and so of the other conditions with which moral philosophy is concerned. And superior reason takes counsel of motives of the divine and eternal order, asking whether a thing is against God's precept, or offends God, or other things of the sort.' 'Ratio inferior consiliatur ad electionem tendens ex rationibus rerum temporalium, ut quod aliquid est superfluum vel diminutum, utile vel honestum, et sic de aliis

<sup>1</sup>St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, lib. XII, c. 7.

conditionibus quas moralis Philosophus pertractat: superior vero consilium sumit ex rationibus aeternis et divinis, ut quia est contra preceptum Dei, vel eius offensionem parit, vel quidquid huiusmodi.' (II Sent., dist. 24, q. 2, a. 2.)

Thus human acts are directed both by superior reason and inferior reason, and the first follows divine and eternal reasons and considerations, the second those which are human and temporal. In the practical syllogism 'the *habitus* of first practical principles (synderesis) will propose for example this major premise: *all evil should be avoided*. And superior reason will add: *adultery is an evil, because forbidden by God*, or inferior reason will add: *it is evil because it is unjust, or contrary to honour*. . . . The minor is furnished sometimes by superior reason and sometimes by inferior reason: and so an error may arise in conscience from a false judgment of the superior reason or from an error in the inferior part of the reason, as when someone is mistaken in the human standards (civiles rationes) of just and unjust, or right and wrong. 'Verbi gratia, synderesis hanc proponit: omne malum est vitandum: ratio superior hanc assumit: adulterium est malum, quia lege Dei prohibitum: sive ratio inferior assumeret illam, quia est malum, quia injustum, sive inhonestum . . .' (II Sent., dist. 24, q. 2, a. 4.) 'Quam quidem particularitatem quandoque subministrat ratio superior, quandoque inferior. . . . Et ideo error accidit in conscientia propter falsitatem quae erat in superiori parte rationis. Et similiter contingere potest error in conscientia ex errore existente in inferiore parte rationis: ut cum aliquis errat circa civiles



rationes justi vel injusti, honesti vel inhonesti.' (*De Verit.*, 71, 2.)

The inferior reason is enlightened and directed by the superior reason (*Sum. theol.*, i, 79, 9, ad. 2; II Sent., dist. 24, q. 2, art. 2, q. 3, a. 1, ad. 5; a. 4, ad. 1.) And it is the task of superior reason in last analysis to make judgment concerning the act proposed to be done. In the volitive-intellective dynamism of the human act (which is to be done *here and now*) St. Thomas attributes the *consensus* to the superior reason—and all the responsibility that that bears with it—because it is in the principles of the superior reason that the last resolution of ultimate practical decision is enacted. (*Sum. theol.*, i-ii, 74, 7; *De Verit.*, 15, 3; II Sent., dist. 24, q. 3, a. 2.)

12. But, which is more important, according to St. Thomas, even if the superior reason and the inferior reason are not distinguished as two different powers, potencies, they are nevertheless distinguished *secundum diversos habitus*—according to their different *habitus*—from the very fact that they are distinguished by the characters of their acts, *per officia actuum*. 'Wisdom is attributed to the superior reason, science to the inferior.' (*Sum. theol.*, i, 79, 9.) 'The superior reason is perfected by wisdom, the inferior reason by science.' 'Ratio enim superior perficitur sapientia, sed inferior scientia.' (II Sent., dist. 24, q. 2, a. 2; *De Verit.*, 17, 1.)

In the practical order the superior reason is perfected by infused wisdom and theological wisdom in their function of regulating action. Inferior reason—which pro-

ceeds according to human standards, and conditions which are the concern of moral philosophy, *ex civilibus rationibus, ex conditionibus quas moralis Philosophus pertractat*—is perfected by ethics, the philosophical science of morals.<sup>1</sup>

We must be careful here not to force analogies. From the properties of superior reason and inferior reason, *considered*, according to St. Thomas, *in the volitive-intellective dynamism of the free act*, we cannot univocally conclude what are the properties of the sciences, *considered as sciences*, by which both are perfected. For example, if philosophical ethics is a science, it cannot only consider temporal things—it must relate its conclusions to that which stabilises moral knowledge scientifically, as its first principle, that is, to the last end of man. It ought not merely to consider a special category of principles of human action and of virtues, but also—from its special and inferior viewpoint—the whole body of these principles.

Now let us ask ourselves what are the consequences for philosophical ethics of considering it as perfecting our lower reason.

In the first place, the inferior reason can furnish the minor of the practical syllogism, and really directs human acts. And so this moral philosophy will be a real practical science which is adequate to its object. By different *media* it will con-

<sup>1</sup>A theologis consideratur peccatum, praecipue, secundum quod est offensus contra Deum; a philosopho autem morali, secundum quod contrariatur rationi. (*Sum. theol.*, i-ii, 71, 6, ad. 5.)



duct *ad idem*, to the same conception of human conduct as moral theology.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place inferior reason is directed by superior reason, and superior reason itself is elevated by faith. 'As the inclinations of sense are elevated by the government of reason to that which is above them, so superior reason is elevated by faith to that which is above its natural knowledge.' *Sicut appetitus sensibilis elevatur per regimen rationis in id quod est supra se, ita etiam ratio superior elevatur per lumen fidei in id quod est supra naturalem suam cognitionem.* (II Sent., dist. 24, q. 3, a. 5.) Thus, this moral philosophy will not be isolated from the *habitus* which perfect superior reason, and especially theology—it will receive therefrom the ruling needed for the proper fulfilment of its office, on its own inferior plane. *Unus enim habitus est regulativus alterius.* (*Ibid.*, q. 2, a. 2.)

In the third place, inferior reason directs human acts properly only in a subordinate way, according as the resolution of the ultimate practical decision is achieved by the principles of superior reason. Similarly, not in the order of the dynamism of the free act, but in that of the organisation of the sciences as such, philosophical ethics, which perfects the inferior reason is only adapted to direct human acts properly *as secondary*—according as it is regulated by the truths and the

<sup>1</sup>*Illa distinctio (rationis superioris et inferioris) est rationis secundum ordinem ad diversos habitus, secundum quod ex diversis mediis ad idem procedit, scilicet rationibus aeternis et temporalibus.* (III Sent., dist. 17, a. 1, q. 3, ad. 2.)

principles of the *habitus* that perfects the superior reason—the principles, that is, of theology.

Now this would scarcely be possible unless philosophical ethics were to complete its principles with the help of these other truths—in other words, unless it were subalternated to theology. With regard to the subordination of the inferior reason to the superior reason in the dynamism of the free act, St. Thomas mentions briefly the subalternation of the military art to the art of civil government. In the order of the organisation of *knowledge as such*, we rightly speak of a subalternation in point of principle: in relation to *practical things*, the *end* takes the part of *principle* and is treated as a *principle* ‘*finis enim, secundum Philosophum, VII, Ethic 8, in operabilibus rationem principii tenet*’. (*De Verit.*, 15, 3.)

And in this way the notion of moral philosophy subalternated to theology can be derived from the doctrine of a *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior*. I have said already that it is only a sketch, because St. Thomas never made this derivation himself. Why not? Because all his philosophical work was implicit. St. Thomas and the theologians of his time received the ethics of the philosophers of pagan antiquity as *historical data*. He wrote commentaries on this system, and quoted it (not always without a certain implicit reserve, a *secundum sensum Philosophi*, being understood), and had recourse in this way to the authority of an imperfect wisdom which had nevertheless existed. And he asked for testimony from it with a freedom which was the greater in that he corrected it by the use he put it to. From it he drew the materials for a



scientific synthesis which was not of the philosophical but of the theological order. He never set out to create for himself a philosophical ethics, any more than he set out to create a general corpus of philosophical doctrine. The Middle Ages never made explicit the notion of *moral philosophy adequately considered or subalternated to theology*: but this is, in short, because (to put the matter in a general way) the Middle Ages never worked at the producing of an explicit *moral philosophy*. The differentiations of our modern time demands that moral philosophy should be made explicit.

### III

#### PURELY PHILOSOPHICAL MORAL PHILOSOPHY

13. Let us now turn to other considerations concerning no longer the virtues but moral science: a science which as *practical* has in view from the beginning the regulation of the concrete act; and which as *science* only thus prepares action from a distance and in a manner less perfectly practical than prudence.

As mentioned above, this practical science has two instances or degrees, one speculatively-practical and the other practically-practical, in which it remains a science when its practicalness is accentuated (even in its mode of conceptualisation) and when it approaches the point of prudence. But now I am not concerned with this distinction, but with moral science in all its extent, and above all in its speculatively-practical aspect.

1. *In man's actual circumstances, can a purely philosophical morality form a true practical science?*

14. *In the state of pure nature a purely philosophical ethic would be adequate to its object, and would form an authentic practical science, adapted for the direction of human conduct (not immediately on the plane of prudence, but on the plane of practical science).*

But in the state of fallen and redeemed nature in which we actually live, a purely philosophical moral science would *prescribe good acts*, because it would be based on natural right—such as not to lie, not to commit injustice, to practise filial piety, etc.

But the prescription of certain good acts is not enough to form a practical science, a true science of the use of freedom, a science which prescribes not only good acts, but which also determines how the *acting subject* can live a life of consistent goodness and organise rightly his whole universe of action. For it is the subject himself who needs to be made good. On the plane of *speculatively-practical science*, as on the plane of *practically-practical science*, this is the object which moral philosophy sets before itself—so far as it is proper to a study which is not that of the *judicium practicum* and of the *imperium*, but of general truths known and organised in the light of causes and principles<sup>1</sup> and elaborated according to a specula-

<sup>1</sup>Est commune practicae et speculativae scientiae quod sit per principia et causas. (*De Veritate*, 3, 4.)



tive mode or according to a practical mode of definition and idea.

In the actual condition of human nature, a purely philosophical moral science would not be capable of *making a man LIVE WELL*, and would not form a true practical science. For all its claim to be a science—knowledge organised under principles and adequate to its object—it would not be truly practical. It would be a practical science which was not really practical—and for this reason illusory. A purely philosophical moral philosophy would only provide us with a system of ends, of rules, and of achieved virtue (*perfectae virtutes*). This system would be doubtless good in itself, but it would be a merely theoretical system, designed to establish in a state of goodness a separated essence, a creature of possibility, a human being other than man as we know him.

Thus, for our last end it would assign God efficaciously loved above all things by natural love. And in the state of our wounded nature, this end is purely theoretical, remote from any possibility of actual realisation. Either we are left with only the forces of our wounded nature, and in this case we are unable to love God efficaciously above all things<sup>1</sup>: or else we fall under the rule of grace, and in this case it is with the love of charity that we love God efficaciously above all things. In either case, to assign as our end God efficaciously loved above all things with natural love is to remain outside

<sup>1</sup>It is natural for every creature to love God more than itself; but in the fallen state of man this love cannot alone rule all our conduct. Grace and charity are also needed. (*Sum. theol.*, i, 60, 5; i-ii, 119, 3.)

the concrete possibilities of human action: outside the whole order of practical things. I called it just now an illusory science.

2. *As a guide it would lead one astray.*

15. Thus, if a man were to take such a purely philosophical moral science as a guide for his life, he would surely be led astray. The *omissions* concerning man's relationship to the supernatural order which are to be found in this purely philosophical moral philosophy would falsify the direction of human life. Though in the world of speculation to ignore a truth does not falsify one's knowledge—theodicy for instance is in no way falsified by its ignorance of the Trinity—yet in the field of practice, where direction must be given to conduct, and where reason proceeds *modo compositivo*, the ignorance or omission of an element necessary to conduct falsifies conduct itself. At its level of knowledge *per causas et principia*, a moral philosophy which ignores the real conditions of human existence and certain of the principles on which it depends—and one of these principles, divine Grace, is as necessary as nature itself—it is not only incomplete, but incapable of directing human life in a proper way.

Supposing you confide the task of guiding your life to an 'independent moral philosophy';<sup>1</sup> you do not know what is the true end of your life: you set about organising it without the help of the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit (of which we have need if we are not to fail to reach

<sup>1</sup>Th. Deman, *art. cit.*



our end). You think you can live a life of inflexible rectitude with the help only of your natural reason and with the help of the moral virtues whose measure is not proportioned to your true last end (and besides, you do not know that their crown is charity). You busy yourself about strengthening the bases of these virtues by purely natural means and efforts, though in truth they can only be established by the growth of charity and infused virtue. You think that natural right is revealed to reason without any reference to the phases of concrete history that are tied in one way or another to a *situation* not purely natural of which human reason has endured the experience. Your independent moral philosophy will prescribe for you good acts, exceedingly good acts, for you and for a purely possible double of yourself set in the abstract spaces of pure nature. But for *yourself* and your soul, for the real substance of your life, it will be a blind man leading the blind.

It is not merely insufficient in the sense that it is a real practical science *simpliciter* but able only in an auxiliary capacity to act as a guide to human conduct. It is *essentially* insufficient in the sense that no science directive of human conduct—no science pure and simple worthy of the name—can exist without taking into account the real and actual last end of human life. Now 'independent moral philosophy' does not know this end. And so it simply cannot be a true practical science capable of directing human conduct even in a secondary way.

Yet, again, be careful to avoid confounding the character of

speculative science with that of practical science. Theodicy does not give a sufficient knowledge of God as He is in the mystery of the Deity, yet it is sufficient for a knowledge of God as Cause of being: but an independent moral philosophy is essentially incompetent in regard to the proper object of moral science.

### 3. *Concerning natural ethics.*

16. As I have tried to point out in an earlier work<sup>1</sup> natural ethics really exists. It establishes precious truths and provides the theologian with indispensable notional instruments. But taken in itself, this moral philosophy inadequately considered is only a beginning or sketch of science, or a mass of philosophical materials prepared ready for science.<sup>2</sup> If it has a truly practical character, it is on the condition that it makes no pretence of crossing the threshold of the science, strictly and formally so-called, of human conduct. It only crosses this threshold when it has been integrated as part of a living whole in a moral science capable of organising in scientific fashion all these materials because it does not ignore the true last end of man and the actual conditions of his existence.

<sup>1</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, annexe II. Sur l'Ethique naturelle.

<sup>2</sup>It might be called a science *secundum quid* and not *simpliciter*. We could go on to notice that the more a *practical science secundum quid* (or *practical science secundum quid*) is considered as *practical*, the less it is *science*. And the more it is taken as science, the less it is *practical*. It then tends to become a speculative science of the practical, a kind of epistemological monster against which even men like John of St. Thomas were perhaps not sufficiently on their guard.



Where, in real fact, are we to find a purely philosophical moral philosophy, or a purely natural ethic? The moralist works on human life. His experience of man is that of real men—and they are in no pure state of nature. In the measure in which experience plays a part in moral philosophy (and it does so in great measure, and is fundamental), and in the measure in which the philosopher respects the data of experience, something more than what is purely natural will enter into his philosophy: though in an obscure and implicit way, because he is not able to discern it. If he seeks to conceptualise and systematise it all in a texture of *pure reason*, with the sole aid of philosophy, he will construct, in fact, not a purely philosophical moral philosophy dedicated to a *homo possibilis*, like that to which we have just referred, but a false morality, designed for man as he is but with its axis all awry. Aristotle escaped this misfortune in some degree only because of the unsystematic character of his ethics: more prudent than the Epicurean and the Stoic, it appears rather as a series of sketches and partial pictures (sometimes very elaborate) than as an organically constituted science. Moreover, even the Greeks did not work on pure nature as their material. These considerations may help us to understand the sort of profit we can derive from studying the great moralists of pagan antiquity, or the non-Christians of to-day. Whatever their deficiencies and errors, we do not find a *purely* natural ethic in Confucius: still less in Ramanuja and Sankara. Nor, in modern times, is a purely natural ethic to be found in Nietzsche.

#### 4. Concerning the sciences of experimental knowledge connected with moral science.

17. Certain difficulties concerning moral or practical knowledge are due to misunderstandings that ought to be cleared up once and for all. Moral or practical science is the science of human acts, or the science of freedom. Which means that in the last analysis and in different degrees—degrees exceedingly different—it bears on the direction or regulation of human acts. It nowise means that it could be reduced to a code of commands and prohibitions, or that the normative character ought to appear *explicitly* in every part of it.

On the one hand, the world of freedom is not, as Kant thought, a world *separated* from nature. It is rooted in nature. It unfolds itself in every sort of natural condition. And, for the same reason, the degrees or instances of moral science where its normative character, its *thou shalt* is the surest, themselves require as wide as possible a basis of experimental knowledge. In the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa*, this normative character is real and deep. But the more so in that it rests, so to speak, in the shadow of being, since it is there as a result of the essential inclinations and of the ends of the being of nature and the being of grace, considered by moral theology in the light of revelation. And this applies still more in the inferior departments of moral knowledge, where the parts of moral science which are ordained especially to gather together the mass of information the science needs, can and should (since their immediate end is to collect facts) be abstracted as far as



possible in their explicit statement from the moralism (if I may so speak) of moral science, or in other words, from the value-judgments to which it refers more or less directly.

But these instances remain none the less a part of practical or moral science because they concern in some way, even the most distant way, human ends and freedom and so are *ipso facto* involved in a movement of thought whose term concerns the regulation of action.

18. Experience plays a fundamental part in moral science. To-day we have developed a large number of scientific disciplines—e.g. in sociology and economics and in what is called *Kulturwissenschaften*<sup>1</sup>—which are a sort of methodical and scientific investigation of the field of experience which is preparatory to moral science and vested in it. They concern moral questions. And they appear in the form of 'positive' sciences concerned with what is and not with what ought to be. Many of our contemporaries think they can become sciences with no more connexion with philosophy than have physics or chemistry.

These disciplines and special techniques of investigation and observation of certain ways of human behaviour, sciences of information, are not autonomous sciences. The distinction which should be made in the field of speculative knowledge between the sciences of phenomena (sciences of the empiriological type) and philosophical sciences (sciences of the

<sup>1</sup>For the actual condition of these 'cultural sciences' consult Edgar Wind's introduction to the *Bibliographie zum Nachleben der Antike* (Bibl. Warburg), vol. i, Teubner, 1934.

ontological type) has actually no place in the field of practical knowledge. For this field of knowledge, even in its specialised areas furthest away from all philosophical concern, and least occupied by normative considerations, suffers throughout its whole length the attraction of a final term and of a typical function (which is intellection at work) and the regulation of human action, which has relation to the ends of human life, and to the last end as well as to intermediate ends. The science of morals—in the strong sense which the word ‘science’ is given in the aristotelian and thomist tradition—cannot therefore be set up and organised without knowledge of these ends. And hence it must consist in science or a body of science of the philosophical order. The positivist conception of the disciplines of observation and of verification with which we are dealing will thus appear as a great illusion. These disciplines are in no sense autonomous sciences comparable with physics or chemistry.

Considered *separately* from theological considerations (however distant) and value judgments (however implicit), and considered *separately* from our knowledge of man they can only be called sciences in an improper sense; and only so far as in modern terms every discipline proceeding according to rigorous methods of verification is called science. They are empirical preparations for science, they form experiential material<sup>1</sup> for what is properly called moral science. And the

<sup>1</sup>Not *philosophical* materials such as those we were concerned with when dealing with natural ethics, but masses of information based on experience.



facts that they classify have a physical and technical value—which falls short of being strictly cultural or sociological.

But history itself may pass into the realm of science properly so-called, when it is assumed into the philosophy of culture. All the more can the sciences now in question become sciences strictly speaking if they are held *in continuity* with a constitutive part of moral philosophy (adequately considered) and are integrated into it as related sciences. Normally, they tend towards this integration, which disengages and sets free their cultural value. As they tend normally to be integrated into the philosophical science of morals, into practical philosophy, it follows that their speculative aspect, which derives from the preponderance in them of the simple registration of actual connexions, is only speculative in appearance. In reality, from the simple fact that they concern morals and without needing to pronounce the smallest *thou shalt*, they belong at least in disposition to the domain of practical knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The part they play and their utility are considerable, and we are entitled to take pride in the advances made in these sciences and in the special techniques of experimental information and in the historical disciplines—as well as in the rigour and the growth of their means of investigation and verification. And a further considerable advance will be accomplished on the day when their vital organic relation with moral philosophy is recognised.

<sup>1</sup>On this point some valuable remarks can be found in Yves Simon, *Critique de la connaissance morale*, Desclee de Brouwer, 1934, pp. 123-42.

19. From the instant when the facts and information they have gathered are *scientifically* grouped and classified, they cannot fail to have reference to value-judgments. And yet, as we have said just now, in their explicit texture they should be abstracted as far as possible from such judgments—though this is never entirely possible. In other words they must tend to put such judgments into parentheses, and by a deliberate effort of abstraction and purification keep them virtual and implicit. But why is this? Not at all because they are of the speculative order; far from it; but in virtue of their proper function in relation to moral science of which they are a part. And the better they fulfil this function, the more should this be the case.

They are sciences of experimental information. Thus the task of passing explicit judgments of value on the material they assemble belongs not to them, but to the science to which they are subordinated in the same category of practical knowledge. If they were used for this purpose of making explicit value-judgments, they would run the risk of changing the material and of forestalling conclusions that it is not their job to reach. And so the sociologist, the ethnologist, the folklorist and the historian especially, while they need to have a moral philosophy so as to understand the things they are talking about, ought to fulfil as far as possible their methodological obligation to avoid those judgments of value which they are always apt to mingle with their work.

And there is an even deeper reason. The moralist has indeed to judge the moral species of human acts considered in



themselves: but not men, not events, not the concrete flow of history save in a very limited way. For this judgment belongs strictly to God. Now the sciences of experimental information—and especially history—deal with this concrete material. And thus the more the man who works at these disciplines becomes aware of the higher mysteries of moral science, the more reserved he will be in his judgments of value. Thus, the perfect objectivity of the moral sciences of experimental information—and above all of history—is not to be sought in a speculative denaturalisation and dehumanisation of these disciplines: but rather in a deeper and more perfect realisation that they appertain to knowledge of the practical order, and have a reference to the philosophy of man and of human acts.

Moreover, has not the Christian before him a model of history that is truly divine: in the historical books of the Bible. The principal author of these books knew infinitely better than all philosophers and theologians 'what is in man'. But He has given us a historical account which is extraordinarily free from moral appreciations and explicit judgments of value. He had a time set for such judgments—on the day when He will judge the living and the dead. Hence their silence in this respect.

## IV

### MORAL PHILOSOPHY ADEQUATELY CONSIDERED

#### 1. *State of the question.*

20. In a *status quaestionis* we ought to emphasise the following point, on which insistence has already been made at the end of the third chapter of this book. Is it possible to prohibit the philosopher from studying moral questions, especially questions which concern spiritual and mystical life? Of course it is impossible. Yet many philosophers deal with these subjects in a defective way, which misrepresents the object. Thus we ought to ask ourselves: how can the philosopher deal with these subjects in his proper field and adequately? And the answer is, by abandoning the procedure of pure philosophy and making use of a (practical) philosophical science subalternated to theology.

Moral philosophy adequately considered is subalternated to theology for a factual reason; because of the actual state of human nature and of the last end to which it is in fact ordained. There is nothing surprising in this, because the existential condition of the acting subject is involved in the object itself, in the *subjectum formale* of the practical science as such. In other words, the practical character of the science has its term in the actual existence of the subject.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For the objections made by Fr. Ramirez concerning moral philosophy adequately considered, see annex III.



21. As we have already seen, it is an ineluctable condition of created or philosophical wisdom that it should have a practical side essentially distinct from the speculative side, *specified* by human acts and *commensurate* with human conduct. Indeed, moral philosophy adequately considered is distinguished at the outset from theology as a science of practical specification. Because of the unbreakable unity of theology, a participation in us of uncreated wisdom, moral theology is not specified by human acts (a point which is too often forgotten in our time) but by the Deity, and it is as such that it knows human acts. It is so to speak 'superproportioned' to them, because it knows them in virtue of a human and created participation in the very science by which God knows Himself. A science for which human acts are an object or more exactly a formal specifying subject,<sup>1</sup> a science essentially commensurate with human conduct, must have a light inferior to that of theology even when it takes into account values of a supernatural order vested in these acts and in that conduct. (Were it not to take such supernatural values into account it would not be adequate to its object and would not be a practical science.)

<sup>1</sup>'Subjectum ad scientiam se habet sicut objectum ad potentiam vel habitum,' (*Sum. theol.*, i, 1, 7)—saltem 'quoad proportionem rationis formalis'. So as to simplify the terminology I use the word object here as in chapter three—but in the sense which St. Thomas gives to the word *subjectum scientiae*, which concerns reality itself reached under this or that formal perspective and not in the sense the word *object* has in point of science, which has to do with the conclusions formulated by science in relation to this reality. On this question see A. Horvath, *La sintesi scientifica di San Tommaso d'Aquino*, vol. i, Marietti, 1932.

The object which specifies it is human, not divine—human and elevated, but not divine. Subordinated to theology and inferior to it, moral philosophy adequately considered has a light inferior to the light of theology, a light which is not divine but human—human and elevated, like the object to which it is adjusted.

But by the very fact that it is subalternated to theology, and that the human light which it makes use of is superelevated, moral philosophy adequately considered has a light superior to the light of pure philosophy.

While moral theology descends from revealed principles, moral philosophy adequately considered, from the fact of its subalternation to theology, in a manner mounts upwards to them. Similarly it may be said that infused prudence descends so as to give a supernatural rule to the human and natural material of our acts.<sup>1</sup> While acquired prudence, in the soul in a state of grace, from the fact of its vital subordination to infused prudence, mounts upwards towards this higher rule.

22. We have already said that moral philosophy adequately considered knows *from below* the very same human life which moral theology knows *from above*. *From below*, from a human point of view, philosophy can perceive supernatural things which are enwrapped in the mystery of life and human conduct. It can do this without lowering or 'humanising' them, but on condition that the human light through which the object is perceived is appropriately exalted. Please God we

<sup>1</sup>Cp. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, vol. vi, disp. 16, a. 7, n. 29.



shall not forget the law of the necessary proportion between the *lumen* and the object, which was one of the main themes of *Degrés du Savoir* as well as of *Le Songe de Descartes*. 'Eternal life' says Fr. Deman, 'is not seen from below.'<sup>1</sup> But is he himself so sure that he sees it from above? Even the theologian, though he looks on it from God's point of view sees it from below as long as he is *in via*. The philosopher without in the least deforming it, can look on it from man's point of view, and see it as it includes the mystery of human existence, granted that he is willing to subordinate his science to theology.

2. *Ratio formalis objecti ut res (ratio quae).*

23. But in what aspect does he view the manners and customs of men? Moral philosophy adequately considered looks on human behaviour, with its eternal and supernatural end, as well as its natural and temporal ends, primarily from the point of view of the natural ends and temporal achievements to which human life is ordered. (The latter ends being exalted but not eliminated by their reference to the supernatural last end.)

The fact that the last end is supernatural, and is only known to us by theology and faith, makes all true science of human behaviour dependent on theology—but this does not mean that theology is the only possible science of human behaviour.

<sup>1</sup>This argument satisfied Fr. Ramirez so well, that he took it up for himself and urged it energetically. See annex III.

For the practical sciences are specified by their ends, but only in so far as these ends are equivalent to objects, and for this reason are viewed under a given formal perspective.<sup>1</sup> Different sciences correspond to different formal perspectives.

But while moral philosophy adequately considered and moral theology have the same generic formal perspective of reality, the same generic appeal of intelligibility issuing from the thing (*ratio formalis objecti ut res*, that is to say, the *agibile*, human behaviour), the formal perspectives of intellection or objective light by which they view things (*ratio formalis sub qua*) differ in each case.<sup>2</sup> And the difference of objective light brings in its turn a (specific) diversity in what may be called the *induced or secondary*<sup>3</sup> formal perspectives of reality, in the aspects according to which the same reality of human behaviour is presented to different sciences. In this section we

<sup>1</sup>Nihil prohibet unam et eandem rem esse finem diversarum virtutum vel artium. St. Thomas, *De virtutibus cardinalibus*, a. 4, ad. 4. Because the end only specifies in so far as it is object, the virtues are specified by their immediate ends and not by their last end—*ab objecto seu fine proximo* (John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, vol. vi, disp. 16, a. 7, n. 30)—and that, bearing on the same matters (though subject to a higher or lower formal rule), the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues are specifically different. Cp. *de Virt. in communi*, a. 12, a. 1; *Sum. theol.*, i-ii, 63, 4, obj. 1, et ad. 1.

<sup>2</sup>In *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, I explained at length, following Cajetan (in i, 1, 3 et 7), the classical distinction between the *ratio formalis quae* (*ratio formalis objecti ut res*) and the *ratio formalis sub qua* (*ratio formalis objecti ut objectum*). The beatific vision, faith and theology have all the same object *ut res* (God in his Deity), but the object *ut objectum* differs, because of the typical mode of knowing.

<sup>3</sup>Cp. *La Philosophie de la Nature*, Paris, Tequi, 1935, chap. iii.



are dealing with these different aspects, with these induced or secondary formal perspectives of reality.

24. The means as such are specified by the end. But the natural and temporal ends of human life are not pure means in relation to the life of grace and glory. They are ends—intermediate or infravalent ends—and in this respect they are not specified by the supernatural last end. They have an order of specification which is their own, though subordinate. And the last natural end of human life is not eliminated. It is realised *in excess* by and in the last supernatural end; so that the supernatural last end can be viewed not only from the point of view of God, as the supreme outpouring and manifestation of His love, assimilating creatures to uncreated life and joy: but also from the point of view of man, as the supreme realisation of the desires of his nature, stretching beyond their limit through superabundance of grace.

St. Thomas considers the vision of the divine essence under both these aspects. And the second, viewed in its being and origin and exalted in an objective, created, natural light, is the one by which theological truths concerning the last end of man are received as its supreme principle, as crown and cornerstone, so to speak, by a philosophical science of morals which is subordinated to theology. Nature exalted by grace above itself does not therefore lose its natural activities and ends. And human nature is not just exalted in any fashion, but is raised to a formal participation in the uncreated life. There are two worlds of different kinds. In the compound of animal nature and reason and grace which makes up human

life—two different worlds, the world of nature and the world of (participated) Deity meet and interpenetrate one another. Such a reality virtually contains many aspects which can be referred to two different sciences—one of them subalternated to the other. It would be vain to try to cut this reality into pieces, and set apart one of them—a natural and temporal order of human life, to be the object of a purely philosophical practical wisdom. It would be equally vain to deny that a practical philosophical wisdom subalternated to theology can have as object this same integral reality, and consider it primarily from the point of view of its natural and temporal ends—taken in their turn in the concrete conditions of the present life of man.

25. A text from Bañez may serve as confirmation, in which like the other old scholastics, he neither raises nor handles for its own sake the critical problem of moral philosophy but refers to it so as to clarify the point of view of theology. Bañez considers moral philosophy as dealing with human acts *in so far as man is ordained to 'political life' and to the natural end: quatenus homo ordinatur ad convictum politicum et finem naturalem*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bañez, *de Jure et Justitia*, proemium. Cp. St. Thomas, *de Virt. cardinal.*, a. 4, et ad. 3. 'Virtutes acquisitae, de quibus locuti sunt philosophi, ordinantur tantum ad perficiendum homines in vita civili. . . . Bonum civile non est finis ultimus virtutum cardinalium infusarum, de quibus loquimur, sed virtutum acquisitarum, de quibus philosophi sunt locuti.'

Note how clearly Bañez justifies the existence of a moral philosophy which is not eclipsed by moral theology. The latter has a more divine way of proceeding than the former, but in no way suppresses it. 'Ad moralem philosophiam proprie et directe spectat de jure et justitia



It is clear that this phrase has to do not with the delimitation of a given material field in isolation from the rest of human conduct, but with the assignment of a formal point of view or formal aspect in accordance with which the whole

*quaestiones definire quatenus homo ordinatur ad convictum politicum et finem naturalem. Ad sacram theologiam maxime pertinet de jure perscrutari usque ad minima respectu boni spiritualis et finis supernaturalis. . . . Ad hunc itaque modum sacra theologia cum sit practica saltem eminenter considerat omnia quae philosophus moralis multo altius et divinius quam ille.* Further on (q. 57, a. 2, 2nd concl.) he explains that the division of law is made differently according as it is made by theology or by moral philosophy. (St. Thomas takes the point of view of the latter—moralis philosophi officium exercens—in the article of the *Ila Ilac.*) And that shows how well Bañez recognises moral philosophy as a validly practical science.

It follows from the same text of Bañez that if politics, like law, falls under the consideration of theology—to which it belongs—in the highest degree—*maxime*—to treat from its own viewpoint the material of human action—it falls also strictly and directly (*directe et proprie*) under the jurisdiction of moral philosophy. For is it not precisely moral philosophy which considers human acts according as man is ordained to political, to civilised life, *ad convictum politicum*? A political-theological science can and must exist. But political science pure and simple is a philosophical political science (which derives not from a *separated* philosophy, but from a philosophy *united* with theology).

'Sub eadem fere ratione' (Bañez goes on to say) 'pertinet ad juris civilis peritos, quos vulgo Legistas vocamus, definire de quaestionibus justitiae et juris juxta normam humanarum legum. . . . Dixi enim sub eadem fere ratione, hoc est respectu eiusdem finis moralis philosophi.' (*Ibid.*, Proemium.) At the back of the long and cruel struggle between Canonists and Legists, which was so fatal for the Middle Ages, there lay a sort of struggle between moral theology and a *separated* moral philosophy which based itself solely on Roman law. Such a struggle could not be solved by the annihilation of one of the parties, but only by a just conception of moral philosophy and its subalternation to theology. This was deplorably lacking amongst the Legists, and it did not occur to the Canonists to provide it.

matter of human conduct may be brought under consideration. The *convictus politicus* or *vita civilis*<sup>1</sup> like the acquired moral virtues is absolutely inseparable from human life in general and the whole order of the virtues. Man only orders his life effectively to his natural last end if he keeps his eyes also on his supernatural last end. So that it would be absurd and an error which none of the great Thomists have ever committed, to cut out of the real and concrete man a *homo politicus* or a *homo virtutum acquisitarum* who could be treated as a man of pure nature, a man who would delimit the field of independent moral philosophy. *Human acts* in the widest sense are the subject and proper field of moral philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Temporal life and temporal ends point out the formal aspect in which the whole field is considered, with all its concrete ends both natural and supernatural, and with all its actual order of virtues, whether acquired or infused.

But then, it goes without saying that as soon as the validity of moral philosophy as a practical science has been recognised, it is *ipso facto* subordinated to theology. Otherwise, it could not validly judge, under the formal aspects of man's ordination to temporal life and natural ends, the acts of a being who is not in a state of pure nature and who only orders his life efficaciously for its natural last end if he also orders it efficaciously for its supernatural last end. St. Thomas teaches that political philosophy, which provides the peak of moral philosophy in the line of the *vita civilis*, ought to make room

<sup>1</sup>That is, life in the order of temporal culture and civilisation.

<sup>2</sup>St. Thomas, in *Ethic. Arist.*, lib. i, lect. 1.



for the consideration of the last end<sup>1</sup>—to which political life has reference indirectly. And he says that 'all the other ends of the practical sciences' not engrossed by theology, 'are ordained, as to the last end of all the rest, to eternal beatitude which is the end of theology.'<sup>2</sup> As I show at the end of these explanatory statements, we may see here an analogy (within proper limits) with the case of acquired prudence and the other natural virtues, whose proper function in reference to human conduct is not destroyed but exalted by the infused moral virtues. They are valid guides to the virtuous man, even to the man perfect in virtue, on condition that they are subordinated to the infused virtues and to charity. And the proper function of philosophy, in regard to the science of human conduct, considered in the integrity and the organic unity of its concrete reality, is not abolished but exalted by theology.

26. It is clear that moral philosophy adequately considered only suffices in a secondary role. Hence by itself alone it is not adequate for the direction of human life: because it cannot itself be constituted without theology, and because it only considers human life under a peculiar aspect—which, though

<sup>1</sup>St. Thomas, in *Ethic. Arist.*, lib. i, lect. 2. And he writes in the *de Regimine Principum*, in dealing with the proper end of the city, that: 'ad regis officium pertinet ea ratione vitam multitudinis bonum procurare, secundum quod congruit ad caelestem beatitudinem consequendam.' If this is the proper end of the city, it ought to be recognised as well by moral philosophy as by theology.

<sup>2</sup>*Sum. theol.*, i, 1, 5. 'Finis autem hujus doctrinae, in quantum est practica, est beatitudo aeterna, ad quam, sicut ad ultimum finem, ordinantur omnes alii fines scientiarum practicarum.'

not abstracted from the supernatural which is involved in this life, is not itself the supernatural aspect.

Pure philosophy in the *speculative* order does not cease to be adequate to its object, from the fact of man's elevation to the supernatural order.<sup>1</sup> But in the *practical* order philosophy is only made adequate *to its object* by being subalternated to theology. Are we to understand that this object exhausts the whole reality and mystery of moral life? From the very fact that the objective light of moral philosophy adequately considered is inferior to that of moral theology, we can find throughout the whole field of morals—a field common to both sciences—problems which derive from one and not from the other. And even when we are concerned with problems that in material terms are identical, they still differ in their formal perspective of investigation and demonstration. So that when dealing with moral philosophy adequately considered we are dealing with a web of scientific conclusions different from but subordinated to the conclusions of moral theology. It is the business of moral theology 'to lead us to eternal life'.<sup>2</sup> It would be discourteous to contest this privilege with Fr. Deman, though, to be more accurate it is the business of the infused virtues and the gifts. If moral philosophy adequately considered leads us also along the same path, it is *en second*, and because its object involves, too,

<sup>1</sup>It is inadequate for understanding all things, but 'the dream of understanding all things' (Th. Deman, *art. cit.*, p. 273) has never defined its object.

<sup>2</sup>*Art. cit.*, p. 273.



the use of our freedom, though more from the point of view of our temporal existence, and of what St. Thomas calls 'civil life', or what to-day might be called the order of culture.

Moral philosophy adequately considered is first and foremost a factual philosophy. The believing philosopher, like the theologian, turns his glance not towards an abstraction of human nature, but towards our wounded nature—the scientific notion of which he has already received from the theologian. But he is interested in our wounded nature, like the novelist and unlike the theologian, for its own sake: and the notion of a wounded nature awakens in his wisdom other echoes than those that are stirred in the theologian. The same may be said of the notion of nature redeemed. In the light of these notions he can study the problems which are his own, for instance of concrete psychology and of character, or the history of philosophy, or political philosophy, or the philosophy of the world and of culture, the historical development of the enigma of the human being and the phases of man's factual situation which are typical for different moments of civilisation; or yet again, transcendent psychology. Of course the problems of natural spirituality, and those of natural pre-mysticism, even those which touch on supernatural spirituality and the mystical transformation of one nature into another, with all that that involves of human values and of human aspirations which have been saved, and human reasons for living that have been broken, are doubtless theological problems first of all. But they are all philosophical problems also, and offer formal aspects

which are of special concern to the philosopher of manners and customs, and sharpen his curiosity concerning concrete nature.

3. *Ratio formalis objecti ut objectum (Ratio formalis sub qua)*.

27. But what above all specifies the *habitus* of knowledge, by virtue of which the particular aspects of things which belong to the *ratio formalis objecti ut res* are disclosed to moral philosophy adequately considered, is the objective light (*ratio formalis objecti ut objectum*), thanks to which the intellect attains its object. I have already pointed out that the objective light which moral philosophy adequately considered uses for its intelligence of human acts, is the light of the principles of practical reason which lead knowledge to operation, and for the purpose put trust in the truths of theology.<sup>1</sup> Moral philosophy adequately considered thus views human acts in so far as their regulation by human reason constitutes a universe of

<sup>1</sup>This *ratio formalis sub qua* is distinguished in its turn by the mode of definition and conceptualisation which characterises speculatively-practical moral philosophy, and practically-practical science, which makes them specifically distinct modes of knowledge. On the contrary, the *ratio formalis sub qua* of theology being the virtual light of revelation, the mode of definition and conceptualisation, which only concerns the human instruments of this science, characterises two instances in it (speculatively-practical and practically-practical) different *but not specifically distinct*. It may be said that in all the sciences whose rank is inferior to theology the *ratio formalis sub qua* is a formal perspective of conceptualisation, and is identified with the mode of definition and conceptualisation. But in theology the *ratio formalis sub qua* derives from the *lumen divinum* and in consequence transcends the strictly human sphere of definition and conceptualisation.



(practical) intelligibility, which only becomes a universe of science if reason listens to theology, and is thus assisted and perfected in the performance of its natural work.

That is why I regard moral philosophy adequately considered as 'subalternated to theology by virtue of its principles, in a subordinate and perfective way, not in a radical or originative way'.<sup>1</sup>

The principles of practical reason—self-evident axioms, premises of reason and experience, knowledge of the natural ends of human existence (the ends playing the part of principles in the practical order)—can be completed in this way by truths received from theology and by the knowledge of supernatural ends. This can be the more easily understood in that the practical sciences proceed *modo compositivo*, organising and 'composing' truths for directing action.

We may ask how moral philosophy adequately considered is a heightened human science, whose light is thus superior to that of pure philosophy yet inferior to that of theology. Every science which is subalternated to another derives an increased light from this fact. Yet this light, especially when it is only a matter of subordination on account of principles, is inferior and attenuated in comparison with the light of the subalternating science. But in the present case there is a further special condition. A philosophical knowledge of manners and customs can only be subalternated to theology if the reason of the philosopher is enlightened and fortified by

<sup>1</sup>*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 248.

faith. It is this which allows for the superexaltation of moral philosophy, making it capable of using, without obscuring principles received from theology—and yet without attempting a theological task.

4. *How is moral philosophy exalted by faith and theology?*

28. A few explanations are needed here with regard to the different ways in which faith can lift reason up beyond itself.

A. By faith, reason can be raised beyond itself as *ministerial and instrumental cause*—which happens in theology.

B. But reason can also be raised by faith beyond itself while still remaining *principal cause*—and that is what we are concerned with here.

(a) First of all it can be elevated *ultra suum specificum* purely in reference to its mode of operation<sup>1</sup> and the conditions of its exercise. This happens in the case of speculative philosophy, which in so far as *pure philosophy* (in the order of specification) is strengthened by faith in regard to its exercise and its mode of operation: in such a way, that the believing philosopher<sup>2</sup> who knows the existence of God by rational

<sup>1</sup>This expression signifies here, and in the following pages, that the connatural mode of operation is perfected (e.g. with regard to the certitude of consent to truths rationally established), not that it gives place itself to a superior mode. Even in theology faith does not elevate reason above its connatural mode of discourse and deduction. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, vol. i, disp. 2, a. 8, n. 6.

<sup>2</sup>*Idem sub eodem aspectu non est simul scitum et creditum ab eodem.* According to the distinction commonly accepted amongst thomists, such a philosopher *knows* the existence of God, author of nature, and *believes* in the existence of God, author of grace. It is this faith in the exis-



demonstration has nevertheless the merit of faith in God. Because faith leads him to make a higher and more perfect act of rational assent to the existence of God, and with an added certitude which is the mark of faith itself.

Let us consider again the text quoted earlier on (p. 86) and recall how John of St. Thomas explains that in the case of speculative philosophy, when we 'philosophise in faith', faith aids and strengthens the philosophical *habitus* and carries it *ultra suum proprium specificum*—so far as the manner of achieving the work of pure philosophy is concerned. 'To understand this we must remember that according to the doctrine of St. Thomas superior virtue perfects inferior virtue and gives it a mode of operation beyond its own specific level, as St. Thomas teaches in the *Summa theologiae* (i-ii, q. 17, a. 1) and especially in the *De Veritate*, (q. 22, a. 13) where he explains it most clearly. Just as the sea water flows downwards by its own movement, but has an ebb and a flow under the influence of the moon: just as (according to the ideas of ancient astronomy) the planets move towards the east because of the nature of their spheres, but suffer a movement in the opposite direction by virtue of the pull of the first heaven: so the will by its own proper constitution has the power only to will, yet by its participation with intelligence it comes to will in a way which derives from its relation to reason. The act of election proceeds by means of a preferential comparison

tence of God, the author of grace, which strengthens the philosophical *habitus* in the believing philosopher. See Jean de St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, t. vii, disp. 2, a. 1.

of one thing with another, and the act of intention has in view the end in connexion with the means. For, to compare and relate one thing with another is the mark of reason, and it is through reason that this character is impressed on the will. And similarly reason partakes of the operative efficaciousness of the will. The act of rational command is in truth an act which efficaciously issues an ordinance: and the fact that it is an ordinance derives from the intelligence, but the mode of efficaciousness it takes from the will which is, in the soul, the first mover in regard to exercise and causality. And finally, in the same way, the superior angel strengthens and perfects the intellectual power of the inferior angel, bringing before it the object illuminated in a higher way, and thus communicating to it a mode of intellection more perfect than the mode of which the inferior angel of itself is capable....<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Pro cuius intelligentia supponendum est ex doctrina D. Thomae, quod virtus superior aliquando perficit inferiorem et communicat illi modum operandi ultra suum proprium specificum, ut tradit Prima Secundae, quaest. XVII, art. 1, et optime in quaest. XXII de Veritate, art. XIII, ubi id probat eleganti discursu: quia sicut videmus, aqua maris ex sua propria natura habet motum tendendi deorsum, ex influxu autem lunae habet motum accessus et recessus: et similiter orbes planetarum habent ex propria natura moveri ad orientem, ex virtute autem primi mobilis rapiuntur ab oriente in occidentem. Ita voluntas ex propria ratione solum habet velle, ex participatione autem intellectus habet velle modo quodam collativo, sicut actus electionis procedit a voluntate comparando, et accipiendo unum prae alio, et actus intentionis respicit finem comparative ad media: comparare autem, et conferre, proprium est rationis, et inde participatur in voluntate. Et similiter ratio participat a voluntate efficaciam, sicut imperium est actus ordinans efficaciter, et hoc quod est ordinate habet ab intellectu, modum autem efficaciae a voluntate participat, quae est primum movens secundum exercitium, et efficaciam:



(b) In the second place the reason, while remaining principal cause, can be uplifted by faith *ultra suum specificum* with regard to the object of knowledge itself and in the order of specification. For then faith brings the reason of the philosopher to acknowledge the value and necessity—so far as a given object the reason is considering is concerned—of the data of a transcendent science such as theology, to which, henceforward, the science of the philosopher will be subalternated. To be convinced that it is so, it suffices to observe that in the case of practical philosophy, 'philosophising in faith' is required by the object itself, by the actual and factual object, and therefore in the order of specification itself: and to observe that faith then carries the philosophical habitus *ultra suum specificum*, not only in regard to the manner in which the task of philosophy is informed, but also to supervise a work which is no longer a work of pure philosophy, and in which truths received from on high complete the truths of the natural order.

And here observe that in the text of the *De Veritate* (q. 22, a. 13), which John of St. Thomas invoked, St. Thomas speaking of the things which operate not only by their own action, but by the action of a superior agent—*non solum actione eodem modo lumen Angeli superioris confortat et perficit intellectivam potentiam inferioris, proponendo illi objectum altiori modo illuminatum, et sic communicat illi perfectiorem modum intelligendi, quam secundum se possit Angelus inferior, ut docet S. Thomas, I Part., quaest. CVI, art. i, et quaest. CXI, art. i, et Quodlibeto IX, art. x, et quaest. IX de Veritate, art. i. praesertim ad secundum, ubi explicat modum quo lumen superius confortat et perficit inferius. John of St. Thomas, Curs. theol., vol. vii, de Fide, disp. 2, a. 1, n. xxiii.*

propria, sed actione superioris agentis—mentions as an example agents which outside their own operation produce *other operations* deriving from the impress of the superior agent in question. Thus, according to ancient physics mixed bodies had certain operations that were proper to themselves, originating in the nature of the four elements: and they had other operations which derived from the influence of the heavenly bodies, which was given as the explanation of how the magnet attracted iron. *Corpora mixta habent quasdam operationes sibi proprias, quae consequuntur naturam quatuor elementorum, ut tendere deorsum, calefacere, infrigidare, et habent alias operationes ex impressione caelestium corporum, ut magnes attrahit ferrum.* We have to do in such case not only with the way in which these things produce their own operations—but also with the productions of operations other than their own proper operations. ‘It is in accord with its proper nature that water should flow downwards. The sea has ebb and flow for its proper movement not in so far as it is water but in so far as it is moved by the moon.’ In the same way, we may add, it is according to its proper nature that the reason of the philosopher pursues the truths of the natural order. And it is as attracted by faith above its proper sphere of action that the same reason of the philosopher recognises the need of assent—through the demands of the practical object (human action) as faith knows it,—to the truths established by the science of faith. And so to receive the where-withal to complete, in the field of its practical knowledge, the truths of the natural order.



29. Moreover, we can consider the general theory of principal and instrumental causality<sup>1</sup> as it is expounded in the *Cursus Philosophicus* of John of St Thomas (*Philos. Naturalis*, q. xxvi, a.1. et 2).

From this doctrine, which is of such vital importance for thomist philosophy and theology, it emerges that a nature can be exalted and produce effects beyond its proper virtue in two ways different in type: either as second principal cause, participating in a higher causality, or as instrumental cause in the strict sense.<sup>2</sup>

In the first case 'sicut aqua calefacta producit calorem, et luna a sole illuminata lucem'<sup>3</sup> the nature in question comes to

<sup>1</sup>Here, so as to simplify the discussion, I keep to the viewpoint of efficient or operative causality. As we have seen in Chapter III, if a cognitive *habitus* acts on another so as to elevate it, at the same time this elevation comes into operation on the side of formal objective causality. Thus, in theology the centre of objective irradiation is found on the level of faith using human discourse, and the premise of reason, as approved and judged by faith, takes on, with the premise of faith to which it is joined, the formal reason of virtual revelation. (John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, vol. i, in i, 1, disp. 2, a. 6, n. 10: a. 7, n. 20 et 22.) In moral philosophy adequately considered, the centre of objective irradiation is placed on a level superior to that of pure philosophy and inferior to that of theology. The premises received from theology clothe a formal philosophical reason, but this formal reason is exalted in its own order by virtue of the communication so established with theology.

<sup>2</sup>We are concerned here with instrumental causality in the strict sense. Sometimes St. Thomas uses the word instrumental in a wider sense—and there is no inconvenience in proceeding in this way when the precise question of instrumentality in the strict sense is not in question. And that is why I have felt myself at liberty to make use often of this licence.

<sup>3</sup>The examples given by St. Thomas in the article of the *De Veritate* here cited bear also on this first case.

share a higher causality or virtue according to which it acts as *principal* cause 'a qua primo et per se incipit motus, et quae non deservit et ministrat alteri, sed sibi'.<sup>1</sup> Because then its own power or *virtue*, which does not co-operate in the action, is *not itself exalted* by the motion of another. The water itself warms as principal agent, but through the heat it has received from the fire: the moon casts light, as principal agent, yet through the light it has received from the sun *nullo modo concurrente propria virtute*.<sup>2</sup>

In the second case, the nature in question—which has no initiative in the movement, all the initiative coming from the principal agent—receives from the motion of the principal agent an instrumental power or virtue through which the principal agent is able to use the native power or virtue of this nature for its own ends, and this native power or virtue is *itself exalted in its exercise*.

Now in theology the exercise of reason corresponds to the second case. Reason produces an effect beyond its proper power and virtue because this virtue itself is exalted, and so reason becomes an *instrumental* and *ministerial* cause in relation to the light of faith. Owing to the indispensable role

<sup>1</sup>John of St. Thomas, *loc. cit.* a. 1., *Vives*, vol. vii, page 438.

<sup>2</sup>This in no way means that the native power or virtue of the principal agent in question is not exercised. But only that it is not exercised *in what concerns* the superior effect we are considering. Its proper virtue is exercised in its own sphere; and the superior communicated virtue, by which the superior effect is caused, co-operates with this proper virtue. Thus a drop of boiling water produces on the hand the effect of moisture and of burning. The communicated causality of the fire co-operates with the causality that is proper to water.



played by reason and its natural discourse, which acts as a medium for the principles of the faith, theology is an entitatively natural habitus. But because the role played by reason is a ministerial and instrumental role, theology is a *habitus* radically supernatural in which the proper virtue of reason is exalted. The light of theology is an objective light—the virtual light of revelation—which comes from the *lumen divinum*, a light that is formally natural but virtually supernatural.<sup>1</sup>

But the exercise of reason in moral philosophy adequately considered corresponds to the first case I have given. Here reason is a second principal cause, which participates in a higher virtue, a participation which is achieved in two ‘moments’.

(1) The superior virtue of faith is communicated to the reason of the philosopher and induces him to accept the truths recognised by theology—and needed by practical knowledge—as truths established by a higher science. In accepting these truths, he naturally has regard to the degree of certitude or probability that is proper to the different affirmations of theology. Now recall the general doctrine outlined in these last few pages, and the principle generally received

<sup>1</sup>John of St. Thomas, *Curs. philos. de Anima*, q. 12, a. 6. ‘Ut constat in exemplis allatis a D. Thoma, q. 22. de Veritate a. 13, aliquando virtus inferior habet elicere actum physice et realiter, non solum secundum virtutem propriam et connaturalem, sed etiam secundum virtutem participatam a superiori potentia.’ (*Vives*, vol. iii, p. 554.) And this can only happen ‘per impressionem realem et physicam a virtute superiori derivatam ad inferiorem.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 553.)

amongst thomists to the effect that 'a *habitus* can make a real *impression* in another *habitus*',<sup>1</sup> by reason of which the latter *habitus* may be carried *ultra suum specificum*. Following this out, I believe we must say that the superior virtue of faith, when communicated to the reason of the philosopher produces in the *habitus* of practical philosophy—without the collaboration of its own special virtue and thus without exalting this virtue—a general act of assent to and confidence in the truths recognised by theology, which are needed by practical science. I am not speaking here of an act of faith. I am speaking of an act of assent like those by which a science accepts the conclusions or the results of another science,<sup>1</sup> an act of assent which the *habitus* of practical philosophy can only produce in this instance with the aid of the virtue that is communicated by faith. The philosopher who believes knows by faith that the proper object of moral philosophy involves conditions known to theology but not known to

<sup>1</sup>Thus John of St. Thomas says (*Curs. theol.*, vol. i. disp. 2, a. 3, *sub fine*) that every subalternated science (other than theology) makes use of *credulitas humana* with regard to the subalternating science. It is not surprising that the communicated virtue of faith can produce an act of natural and human assent in the mind of the philosopher with regard to theological science, for this communicated virtue reaches its goal through an inference and through a judgment which is not the act of belief but an effect of the act of belief, as John of St. Thomas points out with regard to quite another problem (vol. vii, disp. 2, a. 1. n. 27 and 28) which bears on a subject of the human order ('the supernatural mysteries enclosed in human life are known by faith, theology is the science of faith, therefore it is reasonable to trust theology on this question'). We should notice moreover that the conclusions of the theologian which proceed from faith, but through the medium of a natural *discursus*, are not an object of faith but of human science.



philosophy in its own right. And the philosophical *habitus*—by the virtue of faith communicated to reason—produces this act of assent as principal agent, having the initiative in the matter. Though it assents to theological truths, it does so without the intervention of its proper virtue. It trusts in theology, and does not bring into exercise its own proper power. That is why the theological truths received by moral philosophy adequately considered present themselves to the non-believing philosopher as superior hypotheses from which one starts to work. While for the believing philosopher these superior hypotheses are hypotheses guaranteed from elsewhere and certified by a higher source; that is to say, they are true principles.

In this way faith uplifts philosophy—without uplifting instrumentally the virtue proper to philosophy—so as to subalternate practical philosophy to theology. It is the power of faith, communicated to the reason of the philosopher, which brings practical philosophy in subalternation to theology.

(2) Once practical philosophy is subalternated to theology, it is by this very circumstance exalted in its own proper virtue and illumination. But it is not superelevated in an instrumental way, but only by its conjunction with the truths established by a superior science and by the participation in those truths which ensues. And its illumination as science and its virtue as principal agent spring from this conjunction—as happens in the case of every subalternated science. It is constituted a science and as a principal agent, by hearkening to the subalternating science, and accepting it as guide.

In moral philosophy adequately considered, the philosophical reason keeps the initiative in the movement, and acts not as instrumental or ministerial cause moved by faith but as principal cause. It is subalternated to theology and therefore superelevated, but yet it is principal. Faith is necessary as a condition for the constitution of moral philosophy adequately considered, but it plays no *formal role* in the elucidation of its conclusions. The light of moral philosophy adequately considered is thus incapable of leading it to a theological conclusion. It enables it to adduce a higher order of philosophical conclusions. And this on a matter not purely philosophical, to judge of which moral philosophy adequately considered has been empowered by its subalternation to theology, which constitutes it as a science, and which at the same time brings it a share in the light of theology not formally but by participation.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5. *Moral philosophy subalternated to theology.*

As I pointed out in my essay on christian philosophy, purely natural premises and premises received from theology (to which moral philosophy adequately considered lends faith *sicut musica credit principia tradita sibi ab arithmetico*<sup>2</sup>) are for moral philosophy subalternated to theology a unique *medium* of demonstration. Not that the natural premise is ministerially exalted by the light of faith, as happens

<sup>1</sup>I am making use here of expressions used by John of St. Thomas on another occasion (p. 88, footnote).

<sup>2</sup>*Sum. theol.*, i, 1, 2, cp. *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 154.



in the case of theology: faith, as we have already seen, only intervenes here as a *condition* of subalternation. But, the theological premise on the contrary considered only as completing the principles of practical reason, clothes a philosophical formal reason—when the reason of the philosopher does not only believe (by the impression of the communicated virtue of faith) the theological premise, but has recourse to it, catches it up into its own proper movement, and makes use of it precisely as it is taken *on trust* and not as *known*; for reason then becomes a principal cause and takes the initiative in the movement, while a theological truth is only authentically *known* when *faith* acts as a principal cause.

Again, reason in this task receives a certain communication—not *formal* but *participated* in an inferior order—of the light of theology. This, from the fact of its subalternation to theology and the credence it gives to theological truths. So that the formal philosophical reason clothed by the theological premise is a formal philosophical reason lifted to a higher plane, as in general is the formal reason or objective light of the whole intellectual system of moral philosophy adequately considered. (And to this we should add that in the order of exercise, the philosophical *habitus* is helped and strengthened here—as in all ‘philosophy within the faith’—by faith communicating to its conclusions a higher certitude which enables it carry out its toil of reason in better conditions.) It is not a *purely* philosophical formal reason or objective light which enlightens moral philosophy adequately considered and which clothes the theological premises it makes use of; it

is a *superelevated philosophical* objective light. The light into which these theological premises are brought is inferior to the light of theology, yet superior to the pure light of philosophy. Thus, philosophy can make use of theological premises without altering or corrupting them—in a way proportioned to an object which is the action of a nature whose state is not purely natural.

And so we understand that moral philosophy adequately considered receives conclusions elaborated by theology not as simple matter of fact which must be taken into account, but as true principles of science. And it makes use of them itself just as every other subalternated science makes use of the principles received from the subalternating science. But in this case the principles received do not constitute *all the principles* of the subalternated science. They are received so as to perfect and complete other principles of knowledge. These two sets of principles have their sources in two different universes, one in the universe of the Godhead, and the other in the universe of created nature. Which means that the light of moral philosophy adequately considered, while it implies a certain participation in the light of theology, is a light necessarily inferior to the light of theology. And it is for this reason that it can co-exist in the subject with theology, without being lost in or identified with it.

In brief, faith and the light of divine revelation can themselves form a science by making use ministerially of the truths of reason. And that science is theology. Or they can help and elevate reason in its effort to form for itself and in



virtue of an intellectual need of its nature a (practical) science which cannot be rightly constituted without this aid—that is to say, without putting trust in the truths established by theology and without being subalternated to the ‘impression in us of the divine mind’. And this science is moral philosophy adequately considered.

32. We have already seen that moral philosophy adequately considered trusts the conclusions of theology in the sense in which music trusts the conclusions of mathematics. When the moral philosopher makes use of a theological truth, he does not do so as a theologian, as one who knows this truth; but as one who receives it on trust. In so far as they are truths theologically *known* the truths thus received from theology ought to be resolved in the science of the blessed. But moral philosophy does not demand this resolution because it makes use of these truths for its own ends, since they complete the natural principles of practical knowledge; and thanks to these natural principles moral philosophy proceeds *modo compositivo* towards the direction of action. It is a philosophy in faith, and since faith teaches that in its object (human existence and human conduct) there are things which reason alone cannot know, it agrees to trust in the truths of theology that concern this object, and to perfect its own natural principles by knowledge about the proof of which it has no need to concern itself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>That moral philosophy adequately considered can make use of principles which are theological truths without becoming formally theological itself can be shown *modo scholastico* by an *analogous distinction* to the

The moral philosopher ought surely to make use, betimes, of the truths slowly unravelled by the wise and aged, and receive them as indemonstrable principles.<sup>1</sup> Why should he not, in the same way and with greater reason, receive truths which come from the wisdom of God?

33. Fr. Deman says that there lies an abyss between theology one used by theologians to show that theology is an entitatively natural *habitus* though its principles (the truths of faith) are themselves supernatural.

'Nota principia theologiae quae sunt articula fidei posse dupliciter considerari, primo entitative in seipsis, seu ut sunt in se absolute vera et dicunt ordinem ad primam veritatem revelantem: *et sic quidem sunt supernaturalia, utpote immediate revelata, sed sic non sunt principia theologiae formaliter, sed materialiter tantum*; quia sic non exercent rationem principii, cum sic nihil influant in conclusiones theologiae: unde sic sumpta, non sint nisi mysteria fidei quae ad fidem et non ad theologiam proprie pertinent. Alio modo possunt considerari, quatenus dicunt ordinem ad conclusiones quas virtualiter continent, et quae ex ipsis mediante discursu naturali deducuntur. . . . *Et sic quidem sunt formaliter principia theologiae, sed sic non sunt formaliter revelata, sed virtualiter tantum, seu potius revelantia: nec sic attinguntur a fide sed a theologia, proindeque sic non sunt formaliter supernaturalia.*' (Billuart, *Curs. theol.*, dissert. prooem., a. 6.)

We may add that in the same way theological truths received as principles by moral philosophy adequately considered can be considered in two different ways. *Either in so far as pronounced purely and simply true in themselves and truths theologically known*, and then they are formally theological but only materially are they principles of moral philosophy adequately considered. Or else *in so far as truths believed (with human faith) by a science subalternated to theology, and in so far as giving order to the conclusions of which they make the discursus of this science capable*. And in this case they are formally principles which complete moral philosophy adequately considered, but they are now only virtually theological. For it is essential for theology to *know* them, not to believe them, and to illuminate them by the principles of faith, not to illuminate with them a science of an inferior order.

<sup>1</sup>Cp. Aristotle, *Eth.* vi, 11, 1143 b. 11-13. St. Thomas, *Sum. theol.*, i-ii, 95, 2, ad. 4.



and philosophy. And would to heaven that theologians would always keep on the divine side of the abyss! But faith helps the reason of the philosopher to cross this abyss, as it helps the reason of the theologian to cross the abyss (perhaps it is a deeper one?) between the knowledge God has of himself and the human intellect.

If moral philosophy adequately considered involves a certain heterogeneity, the same can be said for many other subalternated sciences, for instance for the physico-mathematical sciences, which are astraddle the first and second degrees of abstraction. The fact that this heterogeneity has a special signification in this instance and implies relationship to a science 'of another kind' and 'breaks the circle of pure reason,' does not prevent the formation of moral philosophy adequately considered. It only makes it a special case.

The light of faith is different in kind from that of pure reason. But that does not prevent theology from taking up in an instrumental way the knowledge provided by reason (which thereupon ceases to be the science of *pure* reason) into a form of knowledge which tends to resolve itself in the science of the blessed. No more does it prevent moral philosophy adequately considered from receiving the truths of theology into a form of knowledge which tends to organise the principles of experience and reason into a rule of action. Here I am not speaking of reason which requires in its essence to be pure reason, but of the reason which can, and in this case aspires to be, enlightened and completed by faith. Are we to say that such completion is not real and vital?

If faith perfects reason as grace perfects nature, what obliges reason never to have the initiative in the operations of knowledge save as pure reason—even when the object requires it to be otherwise? What prevents it from performing, with regard to an object which requires this double light, a work in which rational science—which ceases by the very fact to be *purely* rational—is linked to the conclusions of faith? Here the very conception of reason is involved. The objections of Fr. Deman would be valid if I maintained that moral philosophy adequately considered was a *purely* rational science subalternated to theology. But I have never thought this, and have always maintained that moral philosophy adequately considered is not *pure* philosophy. Rationalism, or at least mitigated rationalism, may admit with ease that in virtue of its essential constitution reason can never operate—at least as principal agent—save as *pure* reason, and may maintain that it ought to know nothing but nature even when the object requires that it should know more. But in no sense is this a thesis of Thomism. The long discussion above is well worth while if it has done no more than help the patient reader to understand this point.

Speaking generally, the world of St. Thomas is not a world of metaphysically closed essences which are isolated from one another, each enclosed within species as in an impenetrable magic circle. Such a conception, like every purism concerning essences, which unduly transfers to the existential order what really belongs to pure logic, could only lead finally to a pure monadology which denies transitive action



and posits an infinity of pure acts, ideal mirrors one of another. The world of St. Thomas is a world of mutual communication and interpenetration, a world of open natures through whose existence runs from top to bottom a flow of causality which makes things and their virtues participate in one another, and lifts them above themselves. Did they not all act in virtue of the First Cause, who nevertheless transcends them all, how could they act on one another at all? What happens in the connexions and dispositions of the natural order also happens, in an eminent way, in the dispositions and connexions of nature and of grace. The notion of a vivifying dynamic participation, both unifying and multi-form, is one of the fundamental notions of Thomism, not only in regard to the physical universe, but also, and in a special way, in regard to the universe of human life, of the soul and its virtues. Nothing is further from Thomism than the idea of reason or philosophy working in isolation from other spiritual energies, and constitutionally opposed to participation in a superior virtue and to superelevation either in the order of performance or, when the object requires it, in the order of specification.

6. *An example of the necessary subalternation of moral philosophy to theology.*

34. An interesting example of a problem deriving from moral philosophy adequately considered (that is, resting on theology) can perhaps be seen in the problem of the *ethics of thought* which has been brought into a lively light by M.

Maurice Blondel, who has shown its importance and originality. What are the conditions and requirements of *right action* in the performance of the operation of thought? This is a question for the philosopher to raise and discuss. But it is not a problem of speculative philosophy concerning the nature of thought and its logical organisation. These matters are already posited. It is a problem of practical philosophy, concerned with human conduct and with freedom. It is in effect clear, and the thomists, in their distinction between the order of specification and the order of exercise have always taught it, that the *application* of our faculties to the task of discovering and elaborating truth is the work of the will like every *usus*.<sup>1</sup> It is the will that sets the intelligence to philosophise. And if, in the order of specification, speculative philosophy, in its proper limits, only admits as principles of determination the intelligible objective necessities, to the exclusion of the affective movements and the options of the will and the pull of action: on the contrary, in the order of exercise, the act of philosophising, as a human act and a use of intellect—and as a human act of a specially elevated sort—presupposes and implies an initiative of freedom and the effort of the whole soul, and the right love of truth, and a whole ascetic of the spirit—of a spirit resolved never to sin against the light or against the simplicity of the first illuminations of his thought,<sup>2</sup> resolved to respect the hierarchies of science, never to offend

<sup>1</sup>*Sum. theol.*, i-ii, 16, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Cp. *Degrés du Savoir*: p. 209. 'La première lumière levée dans son cœur . . . la première évidence objective.'



reality, to accept suffering and agony and what Christianity calls the law of the cross even in the operations of the intellect.

The act of philosophising involves the character of the philosopher. Pride, envy, vanity, gluttony and intellectual avarice, the preference of a dialectical virtuosity and of the false security of academicism to the mystery of being, the spirit of sectarianism and zealous bitterness, a taste for what is fashionable, self-satisfaction or satisfaction with a group or circle, the duplicity which turns against known truth, are fatal to the rectitude of this act. It can only be accomplished with interior conditions suited to its full development if it is fortified by the superior wisdoms, and if it refuses none of the legitimate aids and none of the authentic information it can gather either from above or from below. And the thrust of the spirit in quest of being needs to pass not only from the confused concepts of human knowledge to the distinct concepts of philosophy, but from the latter to the *lived* concepts of a philosophy united in the subject with some deeper experience: and it needs, too, to pass beyond all philosophy and to enter into an experimental knowledge of spiritual things where certain options are required of freedom, for this knowledge is obtained, in last analysis, by dying to oneself, and through the connaturality of love.

Both in the *Degrees of Knowledge* and my studies on Descartes and on christian philosophy I have often said as much. For his part M. Blondel, in reaction against some over-certain deviations,<sup>1</sup> has undertaken to set up in a body of doctrine a

<sup>1</sup>Cp. *De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, pp. 20-21.

whole ethic and pedagogic of thinking. One may wonder whether or not he has succeeded without detriment to philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The building of an ethic for the exercise of thinking was a big undertaking, and from this point of view the merits of M. Blondel's last book, *La Pensée*, are considerable. But though the moral force which runs through this obscure book is generous, stimulating and admirable, its speculative content is deceptive.

To find the reason for this I think we ought first of all to bear in mind that the whole order of objects and of intellectual *specifications*—and thus of philosophy itself as an intellectual virtue having in itself a certain determined *nature*—seems foreign to the considerations developed here by M. Blondel. Even when he makes reference to this order and seems to treat of it, in reality he only considers philosophy in its subjective dynamism—intellectual and voluntary, natural and supernatural—in the *exercise* and movement of the human soul which engages in it. So that strictly speaking in *La Pensée* he does not propose a philosophy of knowledge or of thought, but an ethic and a pedagogic of philosophising (a 'Complete Pedagogy of Human Thought', vol. i, p. 196)—and he proposes it unfortunately as if this meant a philosophy of thinking, and the discovery of its 'genetic secret'. (Vol. ii, p. 423.)

Perhaps it is because of this lack of object and of objective determination that knowledge appears to M. Blondel as a measureless appetite or *morbid* hunger to exhaust reality—the great sin being the pretence of quenching such an appetite otherwise than in the possession of God.

In any event, when denouncing this sin, it is well worth while distinguishing three very different things: (1) the sin of shutting oneself up and becoming immobile in the little knowledge one has (closed compartments) and *trusting absolutely to it*, while God alone never deceives: (2) the sin of being content with playing with notions (dialectics) instead of centring one's knowledge on reality (true science): (3) setting up—which *is not a sin* but the true task of science—a body of judgments and declarations which are stable either in themselves or in their object, that is, assuredly *true*. This body or corpus is never complete and is subject to the laws of progress proper to each kind of science. It must be admitted that this distinction is never clearly made in *La Pensée*.

Nor can we pass by the curious false reading of Aristotle (vol. ii, p. 74) and with regard to conception which seems involved in an excursus



But what I want to point out here is that in any case the study of the morality proper to the exercise of thought cannot be a study of pure philosophy, because it is concerned with the order of human action, the dynamism of the human soul and, in a special way, the relations of reason and of grace, of natural knowledge and superior illumination. It is a study which the philosopher is obliged to undertake. Yet he cannot undertake it validly without subalternating moral philosophy to theology.

(vol. i, pp. 224-228) where under features that are almost unrecognisable M. Blondel seems to speak of thomistic realism. And finally we have the equally strange confusion of the idea of the *consolidation of knowledge* in a demonstrated conclusion (for it is thus that a science is formed and progresses) with the idea of *idolatrous satisfaction of thought* in notions regarded as 'exhaustive' (which derives from a perverted use of science). It is with regret that I formulate these criticisms of a book whose inspiration otherwise is to me admirable.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add here a few lines *pro domo*. In *La Pensée* M. Blondel has misunderstood several of my remarks to which he was kind enough to allude. Elsewhere (in *Frontières de la Poésie*, p. 91, n. 1) I took up a misunderstanding which certainly concerns me (*La Pensée*, vol. ii, p. 119) since it is a matter of a phrase from one of my books (*Les Degrés du Savoir*) which seems to be quoted by M. Blondel. He has put it in brackets, but quotes the text inexactly without even understanding the question under discussion (I was concerned, there, with spiritual or suprarational life, not with the 'human spirit'). M. Blondel has the charitable habit of not pointing out clearly the doctrines he attacks, which both simplifies the discussion and throws on the reader the responsibility of eventual unjust imputation: I imagine there may be other allusions elsewhere to my views, not that these are recognisable, but because the logic of the discussion seems to demand that they should be brought in question at that point, behind the imaginary doctrines which are put in their place.

## ACQUIRED PRUDENCE AND INFUSED PRUDENCE

35. I would like to conclude these observations on moral philosophy adequately considered by pointing out how interesting from this point of view would be a study on the relationship between acquired virtues and infused virtues.

If we bear in mind that the notion of analogy implies differences no less than resemblances, I think there is a certain analogy between the relationship of moral philosophy adequately considered to moral theology, and the relationship of acquired prudence (of the soul in a state of grace) with infused prudence.

One might say that all moral science is continued and completed by prudence, and that moral theology thus is continued and completed by infused prudence. And moral philosophy adequately considered is continued and completed by acquired prudence, as it exists in the soul in a state of grace, where it is joined with charity and superelevated by its conjunction with infused prudence.<sup>1</sup> And purely philosophical

<sup>1</sup>More precisely, and to account for the two modes of the superlevation of the acquired virtues distinguished further on, moral philosophy adequately considered corresponds to acquired prudence which is elevated—but not instrumentally—by infused prudence, and it is in this aspect and from this point of view of temporal ends, elevated but not abolished by their reference to the supernatural end, that it knows human acts.

Moral philosophy integrated in theology, and its instrument, corresponds to acquired prudence lifted up *instrumentally* by infused prudence, and it is in this aspect and from the viewpoint of eternal ends that it is employed by moral theology to know human acts.



moral philosophy, i.e. independent moral philosophy, would be continued and completed by acquired prudence, apart from charity.

36. Unfortunately theologians are not very generous in explanations on the difficult question of the relationship between infused moral virtues and acquired moral virtues in the soul in a state of grace. As is well known, one of the essential themes of the thomist synthesis which is strongly defended by the school of St. Thomas against opposing schools, is the existence of the infused or supernatural moral virtues, which, given with sanctifying grace, take hold of our moral life so as to make it correspond to the theological virtues and the supernatural end, so that we become effectively *cives sanctorum et domestici Dei* (Ephes., ii, 19) and our 'conversation' is truly *in caelis* or in the things of God. (Philip., iii, 30.) As grace does not destroy nature, nor supernatural life destroy 'civil' life, when the soul has acquired the natural moral virtues, these natural moral virtues coexist in the just soul with infused virtues.<sup>1</sup> This point is of capital importance for christian ethics. It follows that in the just soul the acquired moral virtue coexisting with infused moral virtue forms with it a vital and synergic union. And both work together as, in

<sup>1</sup>Virtus infusa est simul cum virtute acquisita, ut patet in adulto qui habens virtutem acquisitam ad baptismum accedit, qui non minus recipit de infusis quam puer. (St. Thomas, *III Sent.*, dist. 33, q. 1, art. 2, q1a. 4, 2e sed contra. See also the *De Virtutibus*. Cf. *Sum. theol.*, i-ii, q. 63, a. 2, ad. 3: a. 3; a. 4, corp. et ad. 1; q. 110, a. 3; *De Virtut. in Comuni*, a. 10: John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, vol. vi, disp. 16, a. 6, *Vives*, pp. 504-505: *Salmanicensis*, vol. vi, *de Virt.*, disp. 3, dub. 1, n. 2 et n. 8.

the case of the artist, the art in his particular intellect works together with the agility of his fingers in the service of art.<sup>1</sup> And the latter communicates 'a real and physical impression to the motive faculty'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Actus virtutis acquisitae non potest esse meritorius sine caritate: cum caritate autem simul infunduntur aliae virtutes: unde *actus virtutis acquisitae non potest esse meritorius nisi mediante virtute infusa*. Nam virtus ordinata in finem inferiorem non facit actum ordinatum ad finem superiorem *nisi mediante virtute superiori*. St. Thomas, *De Virtut. in communi*, a. 10, ad. 4.

Cp. Salmanticenses, vol. vi, disp. 3, dub. 1, n. 22 and n. 8: Quod si virtutes acquisitae attingere debent predictum medium, id non erit precise ex imperio charitatis, sed ex imperio virtutum moralium infusarum, quae habent illud pro objecto specificativo. Et forte imperium charitatis nunquam pertingit ad virtutes morales acquisitas nisi mediis moralibus infusis: ut ad fortitudinem acquisitam media fortitudine infusa, et ad temperantiam, media temperantia, et sic de aliis: unde si tollerantur morales infusae, neque imperium charitatis ad acquisitas perveniet. Quod non obscure insinuat Divus Thomas, q. 1, *de Virtut.*, a. 10, ad. 4. (The same doctrine is found in vol. x, disp. 4, dub. 1, n. 25.) Cp. also: R. Garrigou-Lagrange. *Les vertus morales dans la vie intérieure, Vie Intellectuelle*, Dec. 1934, pp. 232-235. "In the just man charity commands or inspires the act of acquired temperance by intermediary of the simultaneous act of infused temperance. And even outside the production of their acts these two virtues are united in the same faculty, and the infused confirms the acquired. With Christians who are more supernatural, the explicit motive of action which is the most clear is the supernatural motive: with others it is the rational motive, and the supernatural remains rather latent (*remissus*). Just as with one pianist one notices the technique more than the inspiration: and with another the opposite. The motives of inferior reason which involve health are more or less explicit according as one is more or less detached from these preoccupations, or according as to whether one is healthy and need not think about health" (p. 233, note 2).

<sup>2</sup>John of St. Thomas, *Curs. théol.*, vol. vi, q. 62, disp. 16, a. 4. Omnis virtus vel potentia superior, says John of St. Thomas, est motiva alterius inferioris, et consequenter ex ipsa superioritate, et ordinatione ad alteram, potest etiam illi communicare motionem suam, quam utique non fit nisi



To push the analysis further we would need to distinguish, in the soul itself and in the moral life of the person two zones or domains corresponding to the classical distinction between the spiritual and the temporal, between the kingdom of God and the 'political' world or the world of culture.

37. The *infused* moral virtues proportion our action to our eternal end. Their proper domain is that of spiritual or of eternal life begun with life on earth.

'Man is not only a citizen of the earthly city, but he is also a member of the heavenly city, of that Jerusalem whose prince is God and whose citizens are the angels and all the saints, whether they reign in glory and repose in *patria*, or are in pilgrimage on earth, according to the word of the Apostle: *Estis cives sanctorum et domestici Dei*. But for a man to be member of this city, nature is not enough: he must be lifted up by God's grace. And it is clear that the virtues in man in so far as he is a member of this city cannot be acquired by his own natural forces: and that is why they are not caused in us by our acts, but infused in us by divine gift.'<sup>1</sup> If we remember all

per aliquam diffusionem virtutis, aut impressionem vel mutationem factam in alia potentia: Cp. Salmanticenses, vol. xii, disp. 7, dub. 3, n. 63.

<sup>1</sup>Homo non solum est civis terrenae civitatis, sed est particeps civitatis caelestis Jerusalem, cuius rector est Dominus, et cives Angeli et sancti omnes, sive regnent in gloria et quiescant in patria, sive adhuc peregrinentur in terris secundum illud Apostoli, Ephes. ii, 19: *Estis cives sanctorum, et domestici Dei*. Ad hoc autem quod homo huius civitatis sit particeps, non sufficit sua natura, sed ad hoc elevatur per gratiam Dei. Nam manifestum est quod virtutes illae quae sunt hominis in quantum est huius civitatis particeps, non possunt ab eo acquiri per sua naturalia: unde non causantur ab actibus nostris sed ex divino munere in nobis infunduntur. St. Thomas, *de Virt. in communi*, a. 9.

that has been said above concerning *strictly instrumental* super-elevation and *non-instrumental* super-elevation of a subordinated agent, we may say that—in the domain in question, in which human activity is referred directly to the supernatural end which ‘exceeds the faculty of every human nature’—when a moral virtue is exercised, when for instance, infused fortitude resists temptation with the supernatural motive of making us conform to the suffering and redeeming Christ, the acquired virtue is superelevated *instrumentally*. If the acquired fortitude is effectively there the infused fortitude which has need of it, not in the order of specification but in the order of the conditions of exercise, makes instrumental use for its own ends of the acquired fortitude, and of all the facilities prepared in the subject by the latter.

38. The *acquired* moral virtues adjust our action to our temporal ends. Their proper domain is that of ‘civil’ or ‘political’ life or—as we should say nowadays—that of culture or civilisation. ‘The acquired moral virtues direct us in our civil life, that is why they have for end the good of civilization.’<sup>1</sup> Here our activity has direct reference to goods ‘proportioned to human nature’.<sup>2</sup> And when a soul in the state of grace,

<sup>1</sup>Virtutes morales acquisitae dirigunt in vita civili, unde habent bonum civile pro fine. St. Thomas, *III Sent.*, dist. 33, q. 1, a. 4, resp.

<sup>2</sup>St. Thomas, *de Virtut. in communi*, a. 10. Unde et in alia vita hominem perficiunt (virtutes morales acquisitae et infusae), acquisitae quidem in vita civili sed infusae in vita spirituali quae est ex gratia, secundum quam homo virtuosus est membrum ecclesiae. (St. Thomas, *In Sent. III*, dist. 33, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 4.) That is why the acquired virtues will not survive *in patria*. Virtutes morales acquisitae dirigunt in vita civili, unde habent bonum civile pro fine. Et quia haec civilitas non manebit in patria, ideo non



exercises the acquired moral virtues in this field, they are superelevated by charity and by the corresponding infused moral virtues—but *not instrumentally* superelevated. For in this case the initiative is with the acquired virtue in regard to its own ends which are civil and temporal: though the acquired virtue has need of the infused virtue so as to be borne beyond its purely natural point of specification (*ultra suum specificum*) as is proper in the case of a rightly directed ordered civil or temporal life, that is, a civil or temporal life referring indirectly to the supernatural last end. For of itself civil life belongs to the natural order. But this natural order of civil life is exalted by way of participation from the fact of its reference (which may be explicit or implicit 'as life is lived') to the supratemporal ends of human persons; without such a reference the civil or temporal order has not the rectitude proper to it.<sup>1</sup>

remanebit eis aliquis actus, nec circa finem, nec circa materiam propriam, secundum quam tendunt ad finem; et ideo habitus tollentur. Virtutes autem infusae morales perficiunt in vita spirituali, secundum quam homo est civis civitatis Dei et membrum corporis Christi quod est Ecclesia: et haec quidam civitas in futuro non evacuabitur, sed perficietur. (*III Sent.*, dist. 33, q. 1, ad. 4, resp.) St. Thomas teaches similarly in the *de Virtutibus cardinal.*, a. 4, that the acquired virtues, being only ordained *ad perficiendum homines in vita civili . . . non manent post hanc vitam*: only the *infused* moral virtues remain *in patria*. This text of the disputed questions *de Virtutibus*, composed during St. Thomas' second stay at Paris, in 1270-1272, a little after the *Prima Secundae*, (cp. Mandonnet, *Ecrits authentiques*, p. 131; *Bibliogr. thomiste*, p. 16) shows that the Salmanticenses were wrong in thinking that St. Thomas changed his opinion on this point, and that in the corresponding article of the *Summa theologiae* (i-ii, 67, 1. *Utrum virtutes morales maneant post hanc vitam?*) he meant by moral virtues the *infused* moral virtues.

<sup>1</sup>*Clairvoyance de Rome*, pp. 233, 235.

Thus the father of a family who is anxious to establish his fortune because of his love for his children will endeavour to reach this end with the aid of the acquired virtues of temperance and prudence; which, in their turn however, will be exalted by the corresponding infused virtues; and he will recall, for example, the parable of the lily in the field. Thus friendship between fellow-citizens, which is the social tie *par excellence*, will be exalted by charity in souls in a state of grace. Or yet again, the man of politics who sees the immediate dangers in which the refusal to play false will involve his country will be fortified in justice<sup>1</sup> and prudence—if he be in a state of grace—by the corresponding infused virtues which will make him rest his support supernaturally in the providence of divine government.

In this case the acquired virtue has the initiative in the operation, and acts as principal cause. But this principal cause is exalted by the quality which infused virtue communicates to it—and while with its own energy it tends to its own end, this quality makes it tend at the same time, by an energy other than its own, to superior ends. Hence it is fortified and its standard of right, the measure it assigns *hic et nunc* to action, is elevated—at least whenever this measure is not invariably fixed from outside, as happens in the case of justice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Because of the *medium rei* of justice the superelevation of the acquired virtue here consists only in a strengthening of the acquired virtue not in an elevation of its specific standard.

<sup>2</sup>Thus it can be understood that under the influence of charity and infused moral virtue the act of acquired virtue which is intrinsically natural becomes supernatural *quoad modum finalitatis suae superioris* and



39. To return to moral philosophy, we can now see more precisely how the case corresponds *mutatis mutandis* to that of the acquired virtues elevated by the infused virtues. I have just explained that this elevation may happen in an instrumental and in a non-instrumental way.

In the same way, moral philosophy may be an *instrument* of theology. In that case it is integrated into moral theology. So employed and controlled by moral theology, it extends with it to the whole range of human acts; serving the ends of moral theology itself, by being elevated to the point of view which is proper to it; or, in other words, considering human acts *under the aspect* of man's ordination to a divine task and to eternal life.

But moral philosophy may also be elevated by theology *without being an instrument* of the latter. In this case it is subalternated to theology through the requirements of its material, and so as to be adequate to its object. And this is moral philosophy adequately considered. Resting in this way on theology it extends, according to the needs of its object, over the whole field of human acts; this time following its own initiative and for its own ends; and, while retaining its own personal viewpoint, in other words considering human acts *in the aspect* of man's ordination to temporal works and natural ends, elevated (though not eliminated) by their reference to the supernatural last end.

meritorious of eternal life. Cp. John of St. Thomas, *de Gratia*, vol. vi, disp. 20, a. 1, solv. arg. n. 4: and R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, vol. i, ch. vi, a. 2, p. 205.

40. The aridity of the problems dealt with in these reflections should not lead us to forget that they are of great importance for modern life. The conflicts which assail the conscience of our time provide a real *status questionis* of these problems much more than do the disputations of the schools where one may easily take shelter from concrete existence but where it is difficult to learn its lessons.

If through my fault I have been unable to make the reader realise the truth of the positions I have sought to defend, I am convinced that in themselves they are so right that in any event they will prevail in the end. They have indeed no novelty sure in the explicitation of old truths. They are only a doctrinal explanation—made necessary by the differentiations which have been developed since the Middle Ages—of the concrete attitude which christian thinking has always taken in *actu exercito*, in the handling of moral issues. The difficulty here is that the *professional* exposition (so to say) of this thinking by specialists in philosophy or theology may sometimes be inadequate and inferior to the christian sense of the simple believer if these specialists have followed formulae current in the schools that are imperfectly pondered.

We rightly lament the naturalism which is spread over the world in forms that are more or less gross. We should recognise that often, in subtler forms, this naturalism has its roots in ourselves. The departmentalising which easily follows from the distinction that is drawn between the intellectual and spiritual activities, when understood in a material sense, as a principle of separation and not of union, leads many



minds (who think correctly in this or that specialised field, so long as the vital subordination of one special subject to another is not in issue, but who evade questions of frontiers in order to avoid having to consider this subordination or vivification) thoughtlessly to leave the doors open to conceptions which have not been purified from every scent of naturalism and which moreover bring to nature a certain sense of comfort which is not without an element of pleasure.

The problems of christian philosophy, and more especially that of moral philosophy adequately considered are designed to draw our attention—on one particular point, there are many others—to this state of mind and awaken a certain anxiety as to its inner cohesion. It may be that the role and the importance of christian philosophy, which is not a fideist philosophy, but, to use the expression of John of St. Thomas, a 'philosophy in faith', and especially the role and importance of moral philosophy subalternated to theology are not to-day sufficiently recognised—at least in the explicit way needed by the state of our culture. If this be so, one can more easily understand two observations which may be made with regard to what, from the sociological or statistical viewpoint, might be called average christian opinion. On the one hand, this opinion sometimes manifests, even in the case of people whose faith is otherwise vital, a tendency to treat temporal things or things of 'civil life'—especially of politics and social life—viewed *separately* and without sufficient reference to the light of theology—as if man lived in a state of pure nature and as if our Saviour had never come.

On the other hand, average christian opinion sometimes shows (even with people who in other respects have a desire for christian perfection) a tendency to neglect in the things of the spiritual life—viewed *separately* and without adequate support from a good moral philosophy,—the proper ends and the proper goods—which are infravalent but not abolished by grace—of the human and temporal order, of nature and the natural virtues, from the practice of which man has not been dispensed by the supernatural virtues.



## APPENDIX

### REPLY TO NEW OBJECTIONS

In the preceding reflections, I have already replied to the greater number of new difficulties brought up by Fr. Ramirez in an article in the *Bulletin Thomiste*.<sup>1</sup> There is no need to tire the reader by repeating explanations already amply provided. Yet there is still need to dispel some misunderstandings and point out several inaccurate imputations and examine one or two objections which are of real interest. Hence the short reply which follows.

#### I

#### MISTAKES OF INTERPRETATION AND FALSE-READINGS

I am convinced that Fr. Ramirez has tried, as he says, to expound my views faithfully before giving his opinion. But he has met with only partial success.

In this section I attempt to point out a few of the mistakes in interpretation, and even false readings which have found their way into his rendering.

<sup>1</sup>J. M. Ramirez: Sur l'organisation du savoir moral, *Bulletin Thomiste*, April-June 1935.

1. Fr. Ramirez makes me say (p. 424) that speculatively-practical moral philosophy 'does not directly *consider* the *dirigere*, but the *cognoscere* as foundation of the *dirigere*' while prudence '*considers* the *dirigere* directly and exclusively', etc.

But I said something quite different, namely: 'Instead of consisting formally, as for prudence, in *directing* and not in *knowing*, the TRUTH OF THE JUDGMENT in speculatively-practical moral philosophy, *consists formally* in knowing, I mean in knowing as foundation of directing.' (*Degrés du Savoir*, p. 880.) 'If, in practical philosophy TRUTH does not *consist* as in speculative philosophy, purely and simply in the *cognoscere*, it *consists* at least in the *cognoscere* as foundation of the *dirigere*, whilst in practically-practical moral science it already *consists* in the *dirigere*, but in so far as founded in the *cognoscere*. And in prudence it *consists* formally only in the *dirigere* itself.' (*Ibid.*, p. 883.)

To say that an intellectual virtue *considers* knowing or directing is to say that it has one or the other as object. I did not refer to that. To say that *the truth consists* in one case in *knowing* and in another case in *directing*, and in directing more or less predominantly over knowing, is to say that the truth of judgments is constituted by their conformity either to *things* or to the *direction* that is proper to an act: and that, the nearer we approach the *hic* and *nunc*, the less adequately is the infallibility of these judgments assured by the universal and necessary laws of objective science. Fr. Ramirez has read into my book a meaning different from what I wrote.



And hence two objections based on this false-reading are invalid:

'It is not exact' writes Fr. Ramirez (p. 425) 'that prudence considers only directing and not knowing.' This I never said: it is meaningless: and I am aware that prudence is both an intellectual and a moral virtue. I was glossing a well-known text of Cajetan—'*Veritas intellectus speculativi consistit in cognoscere, veritas autem intellectus practici in dirigere,*' in I-II, 57, 5—which concerns the way in which the *relation of truth* is established in speculative knowledge and in practical knowledge.

Moreover it is not from the differences here indicated, which are according to the more and less, that I deduce the specific distinction between speculatively-practical moral philosophy and practically-practical moral science. But in any case the difference I assign here between speculatively-practical science and practically-practical science consists not at all in a difference 'between *considering* knowing as the foundation of directing and *considering* directing as founded on knowing.' (Ramirez, p. 425.) It is a difference between a *less intense* and a *more intense* degree of practicality according as the *relation of truth* is constituted in a way which subordinates more or less the *knowing* to the *directing*.

2. The *raison d'être* I assigned to practically-practical moral science has not been exactly understood by Fr. Ramirez (p. 424). First and foremost it hangs on this fact that before arriving at the perfect practicality of prudence it is normal for practical knowledge to pass through a degree or moment

in which the practicality affects in science the very mode of conceptualisation. The analogy with the philosophy of nature and with the sciences of nature only comes after and casts light on the question.

3. I never said that 'without this practical moral philosophy a certain and efficacious direction cannot be given to action.' (Ramirez, p. 424.) In my view the pretensions of practically-practical science (both theological and philosophical) are more modest and, without denying or minimising the usefulness of moral science organised in a body of doctrine, I am not forgetful that prudence (with all the *lived* science it presupposes, even among simple folk) is of the first importance: 'Scire enim, dicit Philosophus in II Ethic., parum aut nihil facit ad virtutem.' (St. Thomas, *III Sent.*, dist. 33, q. 2, a. 5.) But with regard to the entirety of human history and to culture in general, I think that practically-practical science plays an exceedingly useful part.

4. Fr. Ramirez makes me say (p. 427) that 'the natural moral virtues without charity in the state of fallen nature *are not true virtues.*'

I said *exactly the contrary*. 'Without charity a man can have not only for instance the false temperance of the miser (specified by the *bonum utile*) but *true acquired natural temperance* (specified by the *bonum honestum* in this matter). . . . (*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 102, note.)

He makes me say (p. 427) that without charity the acquired moral virtues *are only* simple dispositions. 'I said that they then remain *in the state* of a disposition (*loc. cit.*); and



there is no need to point out to so experienced a Thomist as Fr. Ramirez the difference between the two formulae.

5. I never said that moral philosophy adequately considered 'only considers the natural moral virtues' (p. 428).

I said quite the opposite. In my view moral philosophy can enter—as Fr. Ramirez somewhat inadvertently notices further on—p. 430—'even into the world of spirituality, grace and sanctity.' (*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 71.) I said that it is not for moral philosophy adequately considered *to produce a treatise on infused virtues* (*loc. cit.*, p. 121, note) precisely because in so far as subalternated to theology it accepts the conclusions of theology on the matter, so as to be able itself to make a proper use of these virtues in seeking the solution for its own problems.

And so falls the objection which is drawn from the so-called incurable inadequacy of moral philosophy (even when subalternated to theology) in face of the supernatural which is involved in human life. This objection rests on the absurd assertion, gratuitously ascribed to me, according to which '*it is forbidden for adequate moral philosophy to concern itself with the theological or moral infused virtues*' (p. 430).

6. 'M. Maritain seems excessively pessimistic when he denies to purely philosophical moral science the capacity of preparing, even from afar, the perfect natural direction ('natural' is added in by Fr. Ramirez) of the concrete human act (p. 103). Notwithstanding this, and perhaps *sui oblitus*, he concedes further on that Aristotle's ethics, as interpreted and commentated by St. Thomas, is a proximate preparation for

moral philosophy which is both adequate and a perfect regulatrix of the human act.'

Fr. Ramirez has not noticed the difference between preparing, on the basis of moral science, the direction of the *concrete human act* (making me know how I ought to act) and preparing the materials of *moral science itself* which will make me know how I ought to act.

Aristotle's ethics prepares the materials of an adequate moral science (moral theology, and moral philosophy adequately considered), which adequate moral science tells me how I ought to act *to become a good man*. If I turn Aristotle's ethics into an independent moral philosophy by which I seek to direct my life; and if I expect it to tell me—on the plane of science which prepares from afar the concrete and prudential regulation of human action—how I ought to act *to become a good man* and direct my life perfectly, I will be led astray by the omissions it makes in regard to the supernatural order and the existential truth of my life.

7. The reasoning Fr. Ramirez ascribes to me (p. 429, lines 1-13) according to which moral science itself suffers, in the state of fallen nature, from an intrinsic weakness or from a *vulnus* analogous to the *vulnera* which 'have reference to the four moral virtues' is apocryphal, and entirely foreign to my thought and to the text of what I have written.

8. With regard to the difference between the expressions 'speculativo-practical' and 'practico-practical' which Fr. Ramirez puts into my mouth, but I do not use, and the expressions 'speculatively-practical' and 'practically-practical'



that I use to indicate the two sorts of moral science which I distinguish, consult Yves Simon, *Critique de la Connaissance Morale*, Paris, 1934, pp. 53-54 and 80-81.

## II

### ON PRACTICALLY-PRACTICAL SCIENCE

Fr. Ramirez (*Bulletin Thomiste*, April-June 1935, pp. 425-426) has not understood my reasons for regarding the sciences of phenomena as specifically distinct from the philosophy of nature; though these reasons were pointed out clearly enough in the *Degrees of Knowledge*. No more has he understood my reasons for admitting a similar distinction between (speculatively-practical) moral philosophy and the practically-practical moral science.

To be misunderstood by a critic is so common an accident that one learns to be resigned to it. It is more surprising to find oneself corrected for a fault one has not committed. Far from attributing to St. Thomas himself the distinction I proposed between speculatively-practical knowing (*savoir*) and practically-practical knowing, I took care to point out that I was *making explicit the principles of St. Thomas* (*Degrés du Savoir*, p. 624): and the long discussion in annex vii while it shewed that 'this explanation is completely in conformity with the principles and the spirit of his teaching' (p. 893) mentioned expressly that it had not been made in the early schools (pp. 891-892). I took care similarly to point out that a remark of St. Thomas (*Sum. theol.*, i, 14, 16) on the *speculative*

*mode* of knowing an object capable of being directed to an end by way of operation—which is often invoked with regard to the notion of ‘speculatively-practical’ knowledge—in reality had something else in view (see above, p. 138, note 2). Finally I insisted in every way possible on the fact that far from positing, as I believe is necessary, a specific distinction between the sciences of phenomena and the philosophy of nature, the earlier philosophers absorb the first into the second. Thus when Fr. Ramirez writes (p. 426): ‘It is not the part of good criticism to interpret St. Thomas according to present day notions: one ought to interpret him in the light of his own ideas. The more or less faithful and homogeneous *adaptation* of the ideas of St. Thomas to our actual age is another matter. . . . *Adaptation* is one thing and *exegesis* another. . . . These things are rationally and experimentally distinct. And they should not be confounded. As for myself, I view with the greatest pleasure all sorts of *vital adaptations* of thomist doctrine to modern problems, provided that the epochs are distinguished and St. Thomas is not dragged *in person* where he never went. . . .’ I cannot admit that these wise and pertinent observations are rightly addressed to me, and that they should seek to lure me to places where I have never been. I cannot imagine that blame should be apportioned with so little care for the truth of the facts.

But let us continue examining Fr. Ramirez’ criticisms with regard to practically-practical science.

He is kind enough to mention that I, as well as he, have noticed that practical medicine is not specifically distinct



from theoretical medicine (p. 426). But is this a sufficient reason for saying that practically-practical moral science does not differ specifically from (speculatively-practical) moral philosophy? The case of the arts, which are practical sciences concerning a line of action (i.e. of the *factibile*) into which enter neither the distinction of prudence and of science, nor of the typical diversities in the mode of conceptualisation, is very different from that of moral knowledge. And I rest the specific distinction between speculatively-practical moral philosophy and practically-practical moral science not on a comparison but on reason. Were it only a question of passing from the 'moral species of the human act' (*ibid.*) to its vague or indeterminate individual instances, there would of course be no occasion for positing the distinction. But in my opinion it is futile to differentiate in this way 'speculative or universal morality' from 'practical or particular morality.'

To give an idea of what I call practically-practical moral science I have instanced (*Degrés du Savoir*, p. 626) the names of Montaigne, Pascal, Shakespeare, Swift, Balzac, Dostoievsky and several others. Does Fr. Ramirez know these authors at all well? Anyway, we may admire the ease with which, in the footsteps of Fr. Demans, he puts them in their place: 'In reality they do no more than *express in a purer language the popular wisdom contained in a multitude of sayings and proverbs*, a wisdom which Aristotle and St. Thomas have assumed perfectly into speculative morality and prudence.' (Ramirez, p. 425. What prudence? Theirs? The prudence whose theory they supply?)

Finally Fr. Ramirez draws an argument from the fact that according to St. Thomas 'the organisation of moral science ordained to action is condensed in the practical syllogism' which only contains 'three terms and three propositions: the major, which belongs to synderesis, the minor which corresponds to moral science, that is, to superior or supernatural reason (theology) *or* to inferior or natural reason (ethics or moral philosophy); and the conclusion which is twofold: one is immediate of the order of knowing and is the ultimate practical judgment (conscience) and belongs to prudence; the other is mediate and of the affective order and is the act of a moral virtue' (pp. 426-427).

But what can we conclude from this? As the minor, on Fr. Ramirez' own admission, can correspond to sciences as different as theology *or* moral philosophy, what prevents it from corresponding also to the speculatively-practical instance *or* to the practically-practical instance of one or the other science? What prevents it from being a premise derived from the *Secunda Secundae* or a premise derived from the Ascent of Mount Carmel? (With regard to superior and inferior reason—which, by the way, St. Thomas never calls 'supernatural reason' and 'natural reason' the reader may consult my remarks earlier in this book (pp. 155 et seq.).

This rapid examination has had its uses. It shows why Fr. Ramirez' criticisms concerning speculatively and practically-practical moral science seem to strengthen my position. The objections concerning moral philosophy adequately considered are not any more decisive.



### III

#### ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY ADEQUATELY CONSIDERED

I have already explained how moral philosophy adequately considered sees from below, without lowering them, supernatural things which are enveloped in the mystery of life and of human conduct. 'Adequate moral philosophy regards the ultimate supernatural end from below.' Fr. Ramirez says with astonishment: 'But can it be seen from below? Can an essentially supernatural formal object *quod* be formally known with the help of a formally natural *habitus* such as (we are told) is adequate moral philosophy?' (*Bulletin thomiste*, April-June 1935, p. 432.)

The argument would be of considerable weight if we failed to recall that theology itself is a formally natural *habitus* (cp. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. théol.*, vol. i, disp. 2, a. 8). Although its fount or its origin (formally revealed truth) is supernatural in itself, theology is an entitatively and formally natural *habitus* (*attingens objectum suum 'lumine formaliter naturali et virtualiter supernaturali'*): 'habitus ille theologicus simpliciter naturalis est' (*ibid.*). This thesis, says Billuart (*Curs. théol.*, Dissert. prooem., a. 6) 'est communis inter Thomistas contra Contensonum et quosdam extraneos.' Contenson reasoned thus: 'ille habitus est entitatively supernaturalis, cuius principia et objectum sunt supernaturalia: atqui principia et objectum theologiae sunt supernaturalia . . .

ergo. Ita Contensonus.' It would be sad to think that Fr. Ramirez reasons after the manner of Contenson and those *extranei*.

Let me recall John of St. Thomas on this point of doctrine: 'Objectum theologiae est aliquid supernaturale, *modo tamen naturali dispositum et penetratum seu illatum: et ideo pertinet ad habitum naturalem et naturaliter acquisitum*, licet veritates suas resolvat in veritates seu principia supernaturalia, sicut dictum est. Et ita licet multa supernaturalia tractet et inferat de Deo: tamen, quia sub modo naturali illativo per propriam industriam et studium illa attingit, *non supernaturali lumine formaliter dicitur illa attingere, sed formaliter naturali et virtualiter supernaturali*, id est, resolubili in principia supernaturalia.—Unde cum dicitur quod medium probandi est supernaturale, scilicet veritates fidei, *distinguo*: ut connexae et penetratae modo naturali, et studio acquisito, *concedo*; ut stant praecise sub lumine supernaturali, *nego*. Ad rationem autem luminis et habitus supernaturalis, *non sufficit quaecumque dependentia et resolutio in medium seu principium supernaturale; sed requiritur quod modus ipse illuminationis supernaturalis sit*, et non modo naturali dispositus et acquisitus et penetratus: licet enim modus sciendi et inferendi per consequentias non praebeat rationem formalem scientiae, tamen *lumen quod solo discursu et industria ingenii naturalis elicitur ex veritatibus supernaturalibus, naturalis ordinis est*; et ex hoc formalem rationem venamur, non ex eo solum quod artificium logicale naturalis ordinis sit.' (*Ibid.*, n. 12.)

To be sure theology, an entitatively and formally natural



*habitus* does not see God. But it deals, *modo humano*, with the beatific vision. Similarly, moral philosophy adequately considered makes no pretension of enjoying the beatific vision. But from the very fact of its subalternation to theology and the communication not formal but participated, which it receives from the light of theology, it can make use for its own ends of the truths established by theology in disputations *de visione beatifica*. In other words, while theology is a *formally natural* and *radically supernatural* *habitus*, moral philosophy adequately considered is '*formally and radically natural*' but, from the fact of its subalternation to theology, it is '*mediately or indirectly attached to a supernatural root*' (*De la Philosophie Chrétienne*, p. 150): which gives a certain peace to those who do not reason in the way of Contenson and of *quidam extranei*.

When the principle that we cannot see a supernatural object from below, or with the help of a natural *habitus*, is used as an objection, there is a sophism of equivocation in the word *see*. Strictly speaking to see the supernatural end of course requires an essentially supernatural *habitus*—the *lumen gloriae*. But to this no claim can be made either by moral philosophy adequately considered or by theology.

To '*see*' the supernatural end in an improper sense of the word '*see*', through the eyes of faith, to believe it as a *formally revealed* object we still need an essentially supernatural *habitus*—theological faith. But this *transcends* theology as well as moral philosophy adequately considered: and neither the *habitus* of theology nor that of moral philosophy adequately considered can elicit the act of theological faith.

To 'see' the supernatural end as an object which can be elucidated in the light of virtual revelation or as object of a science of human mode which is subalternated to the science of the blessed, *we do not need* an essentially supernatural *habitus*: but only a *habitus* which is entitatively natural and radically or originatively supernatural.

To 'see' the supernatural end not as formally revealed nor as capable of elucidation in the light of virtual revelation, but as an object the knowledge of which, transmitted by theology, is adapted to perfect the principles of practical reason in the work (to which it tends naturally) of regulating human acts: or as to see the supernatural end as object of a philosophical science subalternated to theology *does not require* a supernatural *habitus*. All we need is an entitatively natural *habitus* not rooted in faith but depending indirectly, through the medium of the subalternating science, on a supernatural source—that is, on faith.

To be able to deduce a theological conclusion, we need a *habitus* which has a supernatural root. But moral philosophy adequately considered cannot and does not pretend to deduce theological conclusions. It only considers supernatural things in so far as they are implicated in human action. This object, or, to be more precise, this *subject of science* which embraces the acts of the acquired virtues as of the infused virtues, and bad acts as well as good acts, and the principles of acts as well as the acts themselves, and the radical principles (nature and grace) as well as the immediate principles is, as *behaviour of the human being*, something natural which is called to a super-



natural elevation, or already elevated (by grace, and by acts essentially supernatural), and it can be examined and elucidated either—from the viewpoint of virtual revelation—by the theological *habitus*, or—from the viewpoint of its regulation by reason as specifying formal principle—by moral philosophy adequately considered. Then it meets a natural *habitus* which proceeds from the principles of practical reason, completed by the truths received from an entitatively natural, and originatively supernatural *habitus* to which it is subalternated. The philosophical *habitus* in question makes use of these truths in so far as they serve to deduce philosophical conclusions which are elevated in this way, and not in so far as they fall under the illumination of theology itself.

A further interesting objection made by Fr. Ramirez is the following: 'The writer wishes to justify and explain this adequate moral philosophy by saying that it is a philosophy subalternated to theology. And he makes it more precise: to *theology* not to *faith*. (p. 148). Thus moral philosophy takes as principles the conclusions of moral theology. But at the same time we are told that these principles which philosophy borrows from theology are principally the two following: the existence of a supernatural last end, and the fact of fallen and redeemed human nature. But are these theological conclusions or truths of faith? The reply cannot be in doubt. These truths are explicitly and formally truths of faith and not simple theological conclusions. Hence the proper principles of adequate moral philosophy are explicitly and formally truths of faith. And here we are again in the very field

of theology, since theology has for its own special principles the truths of faith.' (Ramirez, pp. 430-431.)

This argument is very interesting because it shews what has happened to a certain conception of theology. Thus only *theological conclusions* alone (that is, new truths not formally revealed, but deduced from the truths of faith) belong to the science of theology; and truths such as the existence of the last supernatural end and the fact of the fall and redemption of human nature, because they are truths of faith and not *theological conclusions* cannot be truths of theology? As if the essential aim of theology was not to 'acquire some intelligence' as the Vatican Council says of its *formal subject* which is the divine reality under the *ratio* of Deity, and as if, consequently, the *principal* thing in theology were not to know in a more detailed and organic form the *truths of faith* themselves, and to penetrate ever deeper into their principles. The science of theology is not confined to theological conclusions which expand the area of its field of knowledge. It includes also, and chiefly, the very truths of faith which are penetrated and connected one to another with the aid of human inference—*ut connexae* said John of St. Thomas *et penetratae modo naturali et studio acquisito*. For a theological inference which starts from a truth of faith can join up with another truth of faith. This augments theological knowledge in depth and is of primary importance to it.

Moreover, when it examines questions which concern the supernatural last end and the states of human nature theology discovers many truths which are not all of them matter of



faith. And moral philosophy adequately considered needs all these elucidations due to the work of the theologians so as to complete the natural principles of practical reason.

For instance, the question of the *lumen glorie* and of the power of intellect in the act of the beatific vision, or the question of whether the 'wounds of nature' touch nature itself or only involve the privation of the supernatural gifts are questions of great importance for it.

It was with the deliberate intention of avoiding the equivocation into which Fr. Ramirez has fallen that I have usually employed the phrase 'the truths of theology'—in the wide sense of truths whether formally revealed or only apt for revelation—scientifically explained and made more precise with the aid of the light of theology—rather than the phrase 'theological conclusions' to indicate the principles which moral philosophy adequately understood receives, as a subalternated science, from theology, and which the logician denominates in a more common sense, the 'conclusions' of the subalternating science. Theology like every science *simpliciter dicta* knows its own principles by turning back on them. Even when the matter concerns a truth of faith theology *knows* it, not in so far as it is a *mystery of faith* which transcends theological science but in so far as it is an *object to which this science returns to examine it, and explain it and make it more definite in the light of virtual revelation*. And this object is received from theology by moral philosophy adequately considered—not as *theologically known* but as *taken on trust* by the subalternated science.

It is worth adding that of the two truths mentioned by Fr. Ramirez (the supernatural last end and the state of fallen and redeemed nature) we make especial use to show the necessity of subalternating moral philosophy to theology. Were we concerned with moral philosophy itself we should note that it has need of the whole corpus of theological truths to complete its natural principles.

As for Fr. Ramirez' other objections, the reply can be found on an earlier page in the *Reflections*, which were composed before the publication of his article. In a general way they reduce to the contention that Fr. Ramirez does not understand the notion of moral philosophy subalternated to theology. Thus he wishes at all costs to reduce moral philosophy adequately considered to theology: and does not see how it is elevated by participation, by its subalternation to theology, without itself becoming formally theological. 'That which elevates, applies' he says: 'thus, is it not theology which applies moral philosophy adequately considered to its object and its end (p. 430)? I reply that in this case, as in the case of every subalternated science: if the subalternated science is applied by the subalternating science, it remains distinct from it without losing its identity in it: and so it can exist in the subject without being in continuation with the subalternating science. It is in virtue of its very constitution as subalternated science that the truths of theology received in moral philosophy adequately considered in the character of principles—I mean as secondary and *completing* principles—apply moral philosophy adequately considered to its object and its



end. In other words, strictly speaking it applies itself to its object *by its philosophical principles and by these which it receives from the subalternating science*. We are not here 'in the full field of theology' but in a philosophical field elevated by the fact of the participation which is implied in all subalternation.<sup>1</sup>

For if moral philosophy adequately considered is not formally theological, then Fr. Ramirez declares it is inadequate for its object by the argument first examined in this third section of the annex and by other similar arguments (p. 431). And to these arguments my reply may be found in chapter III of this book or in the *Reflections*. Let me only mention three things here:

1. From the fact that in the practical order the *ends* play the part of *principles* and that the theologian *makes* the philosopher *know* what is the *ultimate real end* of our life, we should conclude not that moral philosophy adequately considered is subalternated to theology 'by reason of the end' as the art of making bridles is subordinated to the equestrian art, *secundum ministerium et imperium*, but that it is subordinated to it 'by reason of its principles' (*secundum manifestationem veritatis*: subalternation of one *science* to another: cp. John of St. Thomas, Log. II, p. q. 26, a. 2).

2. When philosophy is utilised by theology, it is '*incorporated*' in theology it is true. But by the same title it is not in this case *subordinated* (nor subalternated) to theology. It is an instrument used by theology for its own ends.

<sup>1</sup>Similarly we may observe that acquired prudence is subordinated to infused prudence but does not become specifically identified with it.

3. If Fr. Ramirez asks (p. 431) how moral philosophy adequately considered can be subalternated to theology while belonging to a different order he has only to consult himself for a reply, as on page 425 he admitted that moral philosophy (which belongs to the practical *order*) is subalternated to psychology (which belongs to the speculative *order*). Now, as Cajetan says, the speculative and practical orders answer to the absolutely first division of created knowledge, a division anterior to that of speculative science according to the three orders of abstraction.

Moreover, Fr. Ramirez might read in the good Billuart the following strong remark: Cum scientia subalternata sit inferior subalternante et ab ipsa dependeat, *non requiritur quod sit eiusdem ordinis cum illa.* (*Curs. théol.*, Dissert. proœm. a. 6, prob. 2, dices 2, ad. 1.) 'Do adequate moral philosophy and moral theology belong to the same order: yes or no?' asks Fr. Ramirez. No, to be sure they do not belong to the same order. But before arguing against solutions which appear as new because they answer to problems which St. Thomas himself never posed explicitly, but in which a constant effort has been made to remain faithful to the principles and spirit of the Angelic Doctor, it would be sometimes an advantage to read again even the elementary authors who are classics in the school.

To make an end, I only need to refer to the expression of 'fideist philosophy' used by Fr. Ramirez at the foot of his article (p. 432) which shows in the writer a lively sense of humour or a singular levity. For if one knows what the word



*fideism* means in catholic theology; one also knows (and he knows as well as I do) that there is not even a trace of a shadow of fideism in the positions I have maintained concerning moral philosophy adequately considered.